

JOHN A. SEAVERNS







HUNTING JOURNAL  
OF THE  
BLACKMORE VALE HOUNDS.

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GOING OUT.



HUNTING JOURNAL

OF THE

BLACKMORE VALE HOUNDS.

FROM 1884 TO 1888.

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EDITED BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY THEODORA GUEST.

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Devil :

PRINTED BY THE WESTERN GAZETTE & C. COMPANY, LIMITED.

1901.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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*The Editor has thought that these records might have an interest for the Sporting World. They are an almost verbatim reproduction of the reports printed at the time—week by week—in the “Dorset County Chronicle.”*

*The Editor is indebted to the Proprietor of that Journal for permission to publish them in book form.*

## NOVEMBER, 1884.

*Huntsman*      ...      ...      ORBELI.

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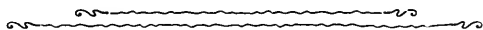
*1st Whipper-in.*      ...      T. JORDAN.

*2nd Whipper-in*      ...      B. COTESWORTH.

# FOUR YEARS' SPORT

WITH THE

## BLACKMORE VALE HOUNDS.



**November 18th, 1884.—**

Since the opening meet these hounds have had fair sport, considering the unusually hard state of the ground, which has made the riding most unpleasant to all who felt how much depended on their horses' legs for their future enjoyment. But in spite of that, and the blind state of the ditches, which have had no rain, and till lately, no frost, to clear them, some good gallops have been enjoyed, and good days will be remembered—to wit, one from Shanks House, where Mr. Grant Dalton provided a good breakfast and an equally good show of foxes, one of which, running a semi-circular line from close to

the house towards Stoke Trister, by Writhe Copse, and back to Shauks, took us thirty-three minutes to kill. During that time there were twelve falls, one gentleman scoring five to his own bat! Two other shorter runs followed.

**November 22nd.—**

Another, not soon to be forgotten, was from an always popular fixture—Warr Bridge—for, although scent was bad in the morning, it improved when we found our second fox at Lodmoor, and the hounds ran very hard towards Rooksmoor, leaving it on their right, on to Deadmoor Copses, running through them without a check, and up over the hill for Cockrow. We left this on our left, and ran hard to the end of Hazelbury Common, and checked by the Church. But they were soon cast on the line again, and ran back more slowly, but hunting beautifully, to Lower Rooksmoor, and back again over some cold ploughs heading for Hazelbury, where scent grew so cold we could do no more, so at the end of an hour and twelve minutes, thirty-two of which were really fast, the Master

gave the word for home. Falls were plentiful, but happily no great harm done.

**November 24th.—**

This last week found us at Chetnole, with the same still, overcast sky, and the wind north-east, consequently without much scent, as the glass was falling slightly. Hounds found in the cover next the Knoll, and ran by Sevier's to Cockram's Plantation. Thence, turning to the right, they pointed for the hills, and ran to the top of them, by Sydling Big Wood; headed from that wood they ran a right hand line back again, and lost. They then found in Whitfield, and ran rather well up by Conway's Gorse into Thornford Firs, and along the line of woods with a musical cry into Honeycombe; but scent failed, and, though they still held a feeble line, about four o'clock they gave up and went home.

**November 25th.—**

The meet was Stock Hill House, the Agricultural Show at Gillingham having taken place the day before. Colonel and Mrs. Matthews kindly welcomed and warmed us, and Mr. and

Mrs. Plowden, the new residents at Wyke, made their first appearance, though, as yet, only on foot. Ringrove and Sandley Covers were drawn blank; but we found an old fox in some turnips close by, which led us to Langham, back towards Stock Hill; by Ringrove and the Tunnel Plantation, where a check occurred; but a "holloa" put us on his line again, and he went to ground in a very few minutes in the railway embankment, where he was dug and devoured in a snowstorm. During this short run the hounds had a narrow escape. The up-train came round the corner out of the tunnel and ran almost into the middle of the pack; but the driver promptly applied his powerful vacuum brake, and (no doubt much to the surprise of his passengers) was fortunately able to stop the engine, and though the hounds crossed before and behind the train, utterly regardless of their danger, and almost heedless of Tom's rate, not one was injured; but it was a most nervous moment for the field, who watched it all from the bridge. The day was bitterly cold, and there was no sport in the afternoon.

**November 26th.—**

Mr. Guest had a bye-day at Folke Village to draw Mr. Drax's coverts there, by his request. A very small field were present, consisting mainly of the Master and Lady Theodora, General Place, and Mr. Clayton. Broke Wood contained more than one fox, and from Butterwick one went away for Withy Tree Copse and Ferney Down. And here followed some beautiful, but very slow, hunting; hounds working steadily on a cold line, by Buckshaw, past Holwell House to the plantations, but there he ran them out of scent as day was declining.

**November 27th.—**

We all met again at Horsington. The lady pack, in blooming condition, were soon trotted off, followed by a good field, to the Templecombe Woods, and found at once. The fox broke on the north side of the wood, but after running a few fields went to ground under a gateway. A terrier was at hand, and the fox moved on into Mr. Dodington's Park, back to his native wood, then over the South Western Railway, leaving West Wood on his left, to Red House Farm.

Here he turned as if for Inwood, and we came to a check; a young hound, however, recovered the line by Martin's Wood, and two fields from there we got a view of him as he made the best of his way into and through Inwood, and heading for Yenston, where he was viewed hardly able to crawl. Retribution overtook him close to a poultry yard, with which he seemed only too familiar. A slow hunting run with scarcely any scent, with a fox from Mr. Dodington's new cover, occupied an uneventful afternoon, and the fox preserved his brush for the present.

**November 29th.—**

Compton Castle looked cheerful as we arrived at the meet, a large field having assembled, and a gleam of sun shone out to add to the beauty of Castle and Lake, which in a few minutes more was enhanced by the chorus of music that burst from the eager dog pack as they pressed the fox they had so quickly found through the hanging cover by the house. He broke at the top end for Littleton Hill, when he bent to the left, and our horses had to gallop their best to keep with



them to Sigwells. Here, after a momentary check, Orbell's horn brought them on to the line again, and we raced over Bristol Gorse Down and across that valley to the opposite hill side; up, through Charlton Gorse; on through the covers of Cheriton Wood; over the pastures and through Maperton Gorse; over the little valley to the opposite hill, where Orbell's "who-whoop" allowed us to draw rein after this excellent fifty minutes. Unluckily, the main earths being open, the dogs were defrauded of their justly earned prey. But it was a run that all enjoyed, and though the ground was greasy and slippery there were no casualties. We next found in Tenant's Wood, and ran with a failing scent to Charlton Gorse and Cheriton Wood, but could do nothing with him; and a third find was made in Dale's Plantation at Cheriton. This fox gave us rather a good afternoon's work, by way of Blackford, and again to Maperton, but he, too, got the better of us.

**December 1st.—**

The first of the month and the beginning of the week found us at eleven o'clock in front

of Captain Bennett's picturesque old house at Cadbury, its time honoured frontage enlivened by the scarlet coats, the many carriages, and the hounds grouped around Orbell and Tom on the grass. The Second Whip was absent owing to an accident to his leg last week. After the Master had allowed time for the refreshments in the hall, kindly offered by Mrs. Bennett, to be done justice to, he moved on to the small covers close to the house, and there a fox was at once found, and almost as quickly despatched, for he ran no further than the laurels, and hung there too long for his own good ; the cover was surrounded by eager sportsmen and pedestrians, and his days were numbered. We then trotted on to Galhampton, and here again testimony was borne to Captain Bennett's excellent preserving, for while hounds were drawing the second gully a "view holloa" proclaimed a flying find just below it, and we pulled ourselves together for a race over the flying country. And, indeed, there was no time to lose, and we had a really good gallop to Cadbury House, leaving Wearyall on

our left, and crossing the Bruton and Sparkford Road. At Cadbury House we had news of him, which the hounds did not fail to endorse in cheering tones as they ran below the house and down to the brook, which they skirted; some ardent spirits jumping it at once, to be on the safe side. Just under Woolston Copse the hounds turned sharply up the steep hill on their right, and found that their fox was visiting the main earths, which, greatly to his disappointment, no doubt, he found strictly closed to him. Hounds dusted him so well up and down the cover that he was forced to face the open once more, and, pointing for Blackford, ran a short ring, returning to Woolston only to die at the end of fifty-seven minutes. The country rode beautifully, and scent was nearly good enough to be the forerunner of frost, but the evening clouded over and turned to rain, and, indeed, in the afternoon there was little or no scent, for, though the hounds spoke to a line in Sparkford Wood, which was the next draw, they could make nothing of it.

**December 2nd.—**

The meet at Holnest Pound did not attract a large field, for it was a really refreshing, soaking morning, a thing we have not seen since last May, and rejoiced in accordingly. The dog hounds were out, and they soon found two foxes in Longburton gorse, but the scent was indifferent, and they could not make much of it. But in the afternoon, with a burning scent, we had better sport. From Little Stockbridge Cover for Six Acres, but leaving it on the left raced for Home Bushes, ran the length of it, thence to Bailey Ridge and past the White House gorses, to and through Sweethills, then into Admiral Digby's plantation, galloping up its broad grass ride, and from here, with no pause or delay, to Remedy, in twenty-eight minutes. A timely check enabled our horses to recover their wind, and Orbell soon getting his hounds on the line again, we ran back into the Grange Woods, and here, while the huntsman was casting forwards, a single hound, Wildfire, had a hand-to-hand encounter with the enemy in an open drain, whence he dislodged him, and chased

him round a field, knocking him over once or twice, and finally brought him to bay, too blown himself to do more than express his opinion, till he pushed him once more into the open trench, where a "holloa" called up the rest of the pack, and Orbell had the satisfaction of handling this full grown dog fox at the end of fifty-nine minutes.

**December 3rd.—**

A bye-day at Redlynch, where foxes were plentiful. Having killed one in the Park, where two more were "holloaed," we then went to Moor Wood, and ran over a deep gully in the direction of Roundhill House; bearing left from there he made the best of his way over a wild and badly drained country, with rough fences that took some doing, into Black Slough and Stavordale Wood, over some of the earths in Stourton, crossing the fields opposite the "Convent" in the Stour Head Woods, and there, at the end of thirty-six minutes, the hounds ran into him, and Orbell broke him up under the great silver fir. Another fox was found in

Godmanstone, but the hounds were whipped off, as he was heading for Cogley, where a party were shooting. Leeks Hill was drawn blank, and the field, not a large one, went home in a good downpour of rain, which came on about two o'clock. Lord Ilchester had shot these covers, killing 1,200 head, of which 1,100 were pheasants, only the week before. This speaks well for the keeper, and for the way he carries out his master's orders to show both foxes and pheasants.

**December 4th. —**

A rather small field assembled at Haydon Lodge, and all sought the shelter of the friendly park wall till it was time to start, as it was blowing half-a-gale, and the rain was cold and driving. Captain and Mrs. Luttrell were out, having returned to their winter quarters early in the week. This was not a remarkably brilliant day—scent, in that gale, and with a falling glass, was hardly to be expected. However, the hounds were running from 11.30 to 3.30 without the crowning joy of a kill, and, having thoroughly

rattled Haydon Gorse, Tripps, Deadman's Copse, Goat Hill, News Hill, and Hanover, we repeated and rather widened the circle by running as far as Snagg's Harbour, and back again to Sherborne Park, where we ran rather fast for a few minutes till the deer foiled the line, and we went out at the top of the park to the Holts, where we lost. A second fox took us through some of the same covers into Goat Hill and Hanover, where a fresh one crossed our line, and took us out by the garden front of Ven House to East Hill, thence a very weak line was marked to Toomer, where we whipped off and went home. A bad day for hunting, but a worse one probably for anything else.

**December 6th.—**

We met at Pulham, and found in Holwell Gorses, and ran a short ring by Hartmoor Farm to Holwell Plantation, and on to Mr. Warry's house, and killed by his plantation. The next draw was a very small withy bed by Woodbridge, and there we found two foxes, one of whom we followed with a catchy indifferent

scent through Stock Park and its covers, when he turned for Lodmoor, but, bending left, he went for Brickell's Wood, and, in spite of a party having shot that cover, and made a good bag, too, the day before, a fresh fox jumped up, and we ran him sharply to the South Common Plantation, and across the river to Holtham, which he left on his right, and went to Pile Lane Plantation, and thence we could hardly keep on the line, but the hounds worked with great perseverance, and made a feeble line over the cold ground under Frith to Stalbridge Park wall, and there, in spite of their good noses, and all Orbell's science, the little fellow in brown fur had the best of us. Church Copse was drawn blank, and we went home rather wet and blown all to pieces by a stormy south-west wind.

**December 8th.—**

A moderate field met at Fontleroi—an old friend under a new name—and, for the benefit of friends at a distance, or any who do not study the ordnance map, I may remark that



we used to meet at these cross roads when summoned to Caundle Marsh. In Ferney Down the dog pack at once proclaimed a find, and ran merrily to Broke, and thence through Withy Tree Copse, over the fields and fences, the latter now in a much better and safer condition owing to the late rains, to Buckshaw Brake, and to ground in a bank outside that cover, in five and twenty minutes from the find. A little talk, hardly time, though, to consider the Redistribution Bill question, which was in every one's mouth, when out he bolted, and, following the edge of the river, not liking the look of the water at first, he presently hardened his heart, and, swimming across, ran up the opposite rising ground, but when half way up Portdown Hill he turned to his left and tried the shelter of Marsh Copse. After this he either got a better start or the scent was not so good, for we could make but a weak line by Fontleroi and up to the Holts, finally losing him in the flat below Dead Mai's Copse. We then went to Snagg's Harbour (I have often wondered who Snagg was), and ran a ring round by Ferney Down and the Park, till

he went to ground near his starting point, and, as the Master advised us, we went home; but he dug him out and killed him. A showery, threatening, but very mild day. Lord Digby was out, with his daughter, two sons, and a grandson; also Mr. Walter Long, from Wiltshire.

**December 9th.—**

Not much improvement in the weather, rain falling all the morning, and a good distance to go, for the Cross Keys, at Lydford, is one of the meets that lies wide. However, punctually at eleven, Orbell arrived with the lady pack, nor was the Master much later, and we soon moved on to a cover close by, where we found a fox who crossed the river and left us; at least, we could hear no more of him. With another we were more fortunate; we found him in Hornblotton Wood, and ran him right handed as though for Alford. Changing his mind, however, he swung to his left, and, passing close to the Church, ran, with a now rather catchy scent, to the Ditchat Hill, and up on to the flat ground above it. Here we got a view of him, and he led us on by

Ditcheat Cover away for Pylle, choosing the wrong moment to cross the line, as a train was just coming up; but, thanks to the signalman, who closed the crossing gates, and the driver, who brought his engine quickly to a standstill, no harm was done, and this same pack may record in its annals another happy escape. Our fox now took a somewhat circuitous route to Evercreech Station, but from there he seemed better acquainted with his geography, and ran straight to Creech Hill, and up it, and, though we cast round, and the hounds seemed to mark a faint line, they could not fairly own it, so, well satisfied with a run of an hour and thirty minutes, and withal rather damp, we left him there and made the best of our way home in a cool north wind.

**December 11th.—**

From Lattiford House we trotted straight to Grove Withy Bed, which Mr. Dendy must regard as the apple of his eye, so jealously does he watch over it. As usual, the hounds had not been in it a minute before a whimper proclaimed

a find, and a chorus of melody followed as they pushed him out, on the south side, and rattled him over Horsington Marsh—where the brook and the fences gave us plenty of work—alongside the Cale, to the South Western Railway, where he turned left and crossed the river, greatly to the detriment of at least one scarlet coat, and went on to Rodgrove, in thirty minutes. He then took a line up to the hills, and on for Quarr Hollow, where, a heavy storm of rain coming down, we completely lost him. Two other foxes were “holloaed” in that flat ground, but, though we hunted one slowly back to Rodgrove, we could only wonder, scent being then so bad, how it was we had done so well in the morning. So the Master trotted us back to Makin Hill—(could this originally have been Milking Hill?)—and, finding there, we had a quick spin to Horsington, where he turned left and back to Hatherley Farm, and dodged in and out of the hedgerows, playing a game of hide and seek with us, in which he had the advantage, and we believe he got up into Hatherley big oak.

**December 13th.—**

A bright sunny morning found a large field, brought out, no doubt, like the flies, by the warmth, at Bagber Bridge. I will not enumerate the names, as those who were there will remember it, while those who were not will not read this account, perhaps ! Yeargrove, Spar Copse, and two little covers at Hinton being drawn blank, we went on to Twin Wood, where the busy little ladies soon spoke to a fox, who broke ; and, in spite of the efforts of an eager field to be even with him before the hounds were, crossed the road in front of us and made for Spar Copse. Here he was headed by a dog, which turned him short back, and he ran over rather a stiff bit of country down almost to Cut Mill, some hounds even crossing the river, but Orbell's horn re-called them, and they ran through the lower part of Twin Wood again, out on the Hewstock side, to the gates of the Sturminster Union. But he was too well dressed to be admitted as a pauper, though he might have been regarded as a casual. So he went on his way and led us down to the Manston

Brook, where those on water jumpers had the best of it—though a bridge was not far off—and on past Manston Copse, then down to the Stour river, which we forded, duly thankful to Mr. Guest for this, one of his many well-marked fords; then turned to the right towards the Bull Inn, nearly getting him there, but he was too quick for us, and made good his way into Piddles Wood, ran back along it and out again by Rose's Mill, re-crossing the river to Manston Copse, where he went to ground in a trip under a gateway. We meantime followed the weak line of another towards Hinton, till news was brought that our hunted one had appeared out of the trip, and Orbell trotted back at once, and, though the hounds spoke well to him down two hedgerows and as far as the river, they could not account for him after it. We were running our fox the better part of two hours.

**December 15th.—**

After a stormy night, we had a long ride on a blustering road to meet the hounds at Odcombe. A moderate field was assembled, and

we trotted off at once to draw the Montacute covers. Suffice it to say there was not a fox in any of them. After this patient but fruitless draw it was a relief to hear a whimper, endorsed by Orbell's cheer, as soon almost as the hounds were put into Chilthorne Domer. After a turn round the cover he broke at the low end, pointing for Ashington, and swinging right-handed he went for Preston, leaving Vagg on his left, and we raced after him best pace till we came to a check near Thorn Coffin. The name of this village did not suggest a pleasant resting place, and Charley did not so consider it, for after a patient cast we hit off his line again down a road, and following it more slowly over the railroad, we passed over the main earths at Brympton, and up to Furzy Knapps, where he turned short back right-handed, and made a line back to Odcombe again, but we lost it entirely there, about four o'clock. The day had brightened somewhat, and the evening was calm, but four o'clock in December means twilight, if not dark, so there was no doing anything more.

**December 16th.—**

A crisp-feeling morning after a white frost. We met at the Kennels at Charlton Horethorne. A large field was out, the Hon. Miss Digby and her nephew, the Hon. F. Baring, having come many miles for a ride with these hounds. We did not find in Milborne Slates, Poyntington Withybed, Ridge, or Everlanes—and, indeed, there is so little lying in these covers, a fox might well choose a warmer resting place on so cold a night. In Spurles we found and ran up to Toomer and back; then from Spurles again he chose a different line, and, after running round the Red House Farm and Bowden Village, and making up his mind to try his fortune farther a-field, by taking the line of Toomer Hill, he went into Frith. No doubt Orbell and his hounds could tell us whether it was the same or not that ran so merrily from Frith over the Valley to Pile Lane Copse, out to Holtham, and thence, leaving the latter cover on his left, to Lanes. They, too, could tell us whether he went to ground there, when we saw the Master and the First Whip looking into a



very suspicious hole ; but, be that as it may, the pack went on with no hesitation, and carrying a strong head, over Stock ploughs, by South Common Plantation towards Stock Wood, but, being headed here, he went for Lydlinch and over the river as if for Puxey, but he swung back through the brick kiln, and we whipped off, heading for Bagber, two hours and thirty-three minutes after finding in Spurles. Mr. Harris, Lady 'Theodora Guest's pilot, got down badly over a gate, but no bones were broken, I hear, and Bob, the second whip, is still conspicuous by his absence.

**December 18th.—**

Totnel Corner added another to my list of casualties, as, after a sharp fourteen minutes from Totnel Gorse to Bide's Gorse, Orbell got severely bitten through his hand as he was throwing his fox to the hounds, by one of them jumping up, and, missing his aim, fixing his teeth in his friend the Huntsman instead of in his natural enemy. Orbell had to go home, and the Master took the horn. After finding and

losing in Whitfield for want of scent, another was found in Tipples; he ran well to Thornford Firs by Conway's Gorse to Whitfield, back again to Conway's Gorse and thence to Leweston Wood, up and down it, down to the little Gorse, and on under the wall to Lillington Wood, back to Leweston, and on to ground by the park wall. Leaving the Master to dig him out we rode home, getting caught in a thunderstorm—a fit conclusion to a wild, wet day.

**December 20th.—**

A large field assembled at Thornhill House, where General and Mrs. Parke and their son made every one welcome, and a handsome breakfast in the large dining-room, with a seat for every one, was warmly appreciated, and the good fare done justice to, especially by those who came from a distance, and who will not soon forget the General's hospitality. The Master, too, was considerate, and, though there betimes himself, he did not move off till the General was mounted and all were ready to begin the work

of the day. The fox was ready, too, for he soon found himself in one of the little covers close by, and we set off at score, down towards the river, which he and the hounds swam over, leaving an anxious and evicted field to gallop round to Bagber Bridge, some crossing the ford close by in rather deep water, up the road to Lydlinch, and in by Ralph's Farm on the right; and after a short ring round, hounds never taking their noses off the line, they ran into him in a hedgerow at the end of fifteen minutes. Having duly despatched him, and Mr. Guest breaking up the fox himself, as Orbell, though out, was not able to make much use of his hand, we trotted back and drew Holtham, finding close by, in Sturts, and we had a slow run thence to Thornhill, where we lost. Found again in Stalbridge Common Plantation, but there was absolutely no scent—our morning run having been due, I fancy, to the hounds being so close to their fox—and after a slow, patient hunt we marked him to ground near Stourton Caundle, dug, and ate him. Another fox trotted from the same earth, and we had difficulty in

stopping the hounds, it being too dark to distinguish anything any more. The weather was still very stormy.

**December 22nd.—**

A large field met these hounds at Mudford Bridge, in a clear, fresh, frosty morning. But little law was needed, as every one was there, including a great many strangers, all of them ready to do or dare, quite equal to jumping on each other; and it required a good scent to get the hounds out of danger, for few of these bold spirits pause to think that zeal is nothing without discretion, and that no riding is so much admired as that of the man who is always well placed, but never does anything unsportsmanlike, such as cutting in out of his turn over a fence, riding imprudently near, or unpardonably over, a hound—little thinking of the serious harm he does in injuring a valuable hound, perhaps for life—or failing to give room to the Huntsman in a crowd. Attention to these details does much for a run, and a courteous field is always the most agreeable to hunt with. We had rather

a long trot to Vagg, where we found ; ran him slowly in the direction of Chilthorne Damer, but scent was not holding enough, and though news was brought that a fox had gone back into Vagg, and though he was seen there, we could not persuade him to afford us any sport. Better things awaited us at Waindles, where we found directly ; and he went away like lightning on the Mudford side, thence, over a fine flying country, towards Great Lyde Farm, where he took a turn to his left, and we lost him at the cross roads near Brimsmore Tree, at the end of a racing five and twenty minutes, which, I fancy, all enjoyed ; and some, thinking this was the run of the day, went home. But it was not so at all, for we found a good fox in Limington Warren, who broke on the Chilthorne Damer side, and went over the brook ; here he doubled back, and ran fast to Ashington Wood, through it, and on towards Waindles. Leaving this cover on his left, he went on by Great Lyde Farm to Upper Mudford, where he crossed the river, and we had to gallop round some little way before we found a bridge, but we rejoined

hounds at the Trent Covers; thence he bore away for Nether Compton, but, leaving it on the right, we worked along the brook, hunting slowly into Trent Barrow and up to Chorlock Hill, where hounds were stopped at after half-past four, after running an hour and twenty minutes, the first part fast, the latter more slowly—which, perhaps, was as well, or not a horse would have been there to see—especially as the latter part was run by moonlight, and a long, weary, and dark ride home some of the field must have had.

**December 23rd.**—

The meet was fixed for Clifton Wood, and the frost that threatened to be sharp last night had not come to much, so we trotted gaily off to cover, with every anticipation of a good day's sport, which was realised in the afternoon. In the morning we did not do much. Finding one fox in Clifton Wood, we hunted him in the direction of Coker Wood, where he ran us out of scent. But later in the day a little wood under Beerhacket produced a very different

sort of animal, for he was away at once, and ran very hard over the brook and away for Whitfield, but before reaching its friendly shelter he turned sharp to the left, and leaving Knighton Gorse on the right, he went over the top of the Beerhacket Hill, trying to get back to his early home. But he was headed thence and made for Leweston, and there we pressed him so hard that he could trust no longer to his speed, and resolved to try his cunning, so went to ground in a trip under a gateway, close to Mr. Conway's, at Lillington. But his last resource failed him, and the lady pack made short work of him, rejoicing over what they no doubt regarded as their Christmas dinner. This run lasted thirty-two minutes, and those who were lucky enough to be in it will think it over with pleasure.

**December 26th.—**

Found a goodly assemblage at the West Hill Gate. Horse and foot were there, carriages and traps, little Christmas holiday boys, and big ones, too, all determined to enjoy the sport of

kings on Boxing Day. And they had a good chance of doing so, for we spent the morning riding up and down and round and round Honeycombe after a brace of foxes, which were quite willing to serve the public, but not at the cost of their brushes, for they preserved both intact. Towards two o'clock the Master trotted off to Green Lane, a quiet little cover hard by, whence a fox broke at the low end, and, heading for Westhall, gave our brook jumpers an opportunity of distinguishing themselves — raced thence into Leweston Park, the hounds making rich melody as they crossed the park for the Rookery, and on into Leweston Wood, round which he took a turn as if looking for the late owner—and it did seem a pity so good a house should be tenantless. Then, as soon as we could get out of cover, we saw hounds fleeing from us over the big field with the brook at the bottom, over which we jumped with no time to pick our place, heading for Whitfield; but bearing a little left, we went into Home Bushes, and on to the road, where we had a momentary check, but a hound picked out the line in the



field across the road, and a ringing cheer from Orbell soon brought the rest of the pack up; and with their noses down, and no time to speak to the scent except an occasional word or two from the leading hound, they carried it on by Gaulpits and the back of Holnest Park, through Holnest Churchyard, and thence for Berkeley Gorse. Here they turned left, still running well, towards Butterwick, over the Butterwick Brook, which caused many to hesitate, and some to ride round, and on to Boys Hill. Just before this a stiff piece of timber afforded an opportunity to youthful ardour to distinguish itself; one gentleman on getting over finding himself on the ground, and his saddle, too, where it remained, while his horse picked itself up. A few more dirty coats told tales before the day was over; but it was not over yet, for, from Boys Hill, we went close to Buckshaw House, then, turning as if for Round Chimneys, we went on more slowly, heading for Glanville's Wootton Covers, which, however, he did not touch, but made his way slowly over Newland Farm and Duntishe Common, where daylight

failed, and hounds were stopped, after a fine run of an hour and forty minutes. Though a very cold day it was a thoroughly pleasant one, and our Boxing Day run will be one to be remembered.

**December 27th.**—

The morning broke with still the same cold east wind we have had for some time, and, having met at Pulham, we went at once to Shortwood, found, and ran a sort of ring in the Hazelbury direction through Mappowder, and then slowly to the hills, stopping hounds at Plush. Back to Shortwood, found, and ran somewhat in the same direction as the morning run, losing at Mappowder. We then drew Humber Wood, and had a very fast twenty minutes by Shortwood, Bewley, and Brockhampton Covers, to Canning's Court, by Pulham Rectory to Hartmoor Farm, and, after casting in vain towards Pulham Gorses, we gave it up, and the Master sent us home, well contented with our "Christmas number" of runs.

**December 29th.—**

We had to start early, for the meet was considerably further off than anything we are accustomed to. But we got to Kingweston about eleven o'clock, and found Orbell and his dog pack looking ready and fit for work. They found a brace of foxes in Down Wood, one of the outling Kingweston covers, and, with very bad scent, ran one of them in the direction of Charlton Mackrell; came soon back to the other and ran him to ground in Kingweston Park, in a sluice out of a pond, and there we left him. We had a slow hunting run in the afternoon from Butleigh Wood, first in the wood, then out towards Wootton, doubling back on to Dundon Beacon, into a small hanging cover; but we forced him out thence, and over the Beacon, running in to him at the foot of it, on the edge of Sedgemoor, by Redlake. The run occupied about an hour, and the Master presented the brush to Miss Hood. There was a good field out, and a strong force of pedestrians.

**December 30th.—**

Tuesday was a red letter day for those who hunt with these hounds. The meet was at Jack White's Gibbet. That notorious character does not usually attract a large attendance, but there was a fair muster this morning. The calm weather and the continuance of a steady east wind, combined with a rising glass, might reasonably make one expect a scent, but few anticipated the run that followed. We trotted on the short distance to Hadspen, and hounds were thrown into the covers in the Park. They found quickly, and the Master's horn from the upper end soon brought Orbell and the pack on to the line of a fine old wolf of a fox, which went away as if he meant it. He first took a sharp turn round Hadspen, which threw out some of the field, and then went away westward to Grove, and over the hilly ground by Honeywick, in the direction of Ridge Barn and Cole Crib, at a racing pace, making for the railway near Wyke Champflower; he crossed it here, and on account of this line and the river Brue hounds were for some time alone.

However, he ran parallel to the railway for some way, and then re-crossed the same river near Castle Cary Station, which he left on his left, and raced on to Lamyatt, swinging under Creech Hill to Milton Wood, where he did not dwell, but went on to Evercreech town, outside of which hounds came to a check, which enabled those who had been thrown out by the river to rejoin them. A quick cast of Orbell's soon got the active little ladies on the line again, and we now bore a little to the left, skirting the town, and running under the Evercreech and Shepton Mallet Railway, crossing the railway again very soon to Evercreech Park Farm, and on to Pye Hill. As hounds were crossing the line a train came round the bend, and we had a moment of fearful anxiety ; but, happily, the engine driver was able to stop in time to save the pack, which thus chronicles its third escape from a similar danger this season. After Pye Hill scent became cold, and we had some wonderfully patient hunting, hearing of our fox now and then, some ten minutes ahead of us ; and hounds worked slowly, but most beautifully, after

him in the direction of East Pennard House, under which we had a long check, and it looked as if it was all up. Still, the Master, convinced that our hunted fox was in front of us, persevered, and was presently rewarded by seeing a reliable hound hit it off down a green lane, and we resumed our pursuit with a diminished field, picking it out, inch by inch, northward, and then eastward, towards West Pennard, the great grey "Tor" of Glastonbury looming before us. Before reaching the town, however, he turned right-handed, and, running over the open earths at Wetherall Combe, he bore eastward, hounds now pressing him, and we heard of him close in front of us. Now occurred a most critical event, for a fox was viewed in a hedge, apparently the hunted one, but luckily the Master got a view at him and pronounced him a fresh one. Hounds running in front with their noses down never noticed him, and almost directly after the hunted fox was viewed dead beat, struggling out of a road, and we thought we had got him; but not so, for, gathering himself together for a final effort, he set

his face for the unknown regions of Sedgemoor. At this spot Orbell had a fall, breaking his stirrup leather and losing his horse, so he was out of it. The Master and Tom, however, were equal to the occasion, and we presently noticed that we were joined by a stranger on a dark grey horse, and he especially caught our attention by going head over heels at a fence, the Master saying to the First Whip, "Tom, whatever happens, we must not lose that man"—so Tom caught his horse and started him again, and invaluable he proved from his acquaintance with the Moors. We were now launched into the country of rhines—enormous ditches that drain the Moor, wide as brooks, and deep as despair; but though it was somewhat hard on horses to meet with half-a-dozen of these at the end of four hours, no accidents occurred, in spite of the Master having a very narrow escape from a man crossing him at the edge of one, and the big brown only just reached the opposite shore. Some of these widened into unjumpable canals, and here our friend-on-the-grey's knowledge of the bridges was most useful. We

reached the road between North Wootton and Barrow, close to hounds, which were running hard, when a man rushed out of a farm gate—"Here he be, sir, here he be," and we swung through the farmyard in time to see the eager pack tearing their fox in the field. He had just jumped into the arms of an old woman at the door-way, who rejected his advances, and he fell back into the mouths of the hungry and excited pack. The Master was first up; and never can he and Tom have sung out "Who-whoop" with keener delight, for here was the fox we had found at twenty minutes to twelve pulled down in the open at twelve minutes to four, after a real old-fashioned run of four hours and eight minutes—every hound, save one old one, was up at the death; Lady Theodora, and her groom, F. Gould, were next up, and Mr. Rome, of Compton Castle, Mr. Turner, Mr. Berkley Napier, with Messrs. Maidment and Richards, Mr. Corp (our valuable pilot), the Master's second horseman, and one or two more made up the fourteen or fifteen who were in at the death, and a more brilliant



finish to 1884 one could not wish to see. Time to the first check, at Everereech, about fifty-eight minutes; to that under Pennard House, two hours and thirty-five minutes; while the last bit, from West Pennard Church, was a race of about twenty minutes.

**January 1st, 1885.—**

New Year's Day brought out a good many to see the sport from Haydon Lodge, and conversation ran much on Tuesday's fine and memorable run. This morning there was not much scent, but still we managed to account for two foxes in Sherborne Park, and having run round about it and the neighbouring covers for some time, we at length lighted on a fox which seemed willing to take us further. He started from the hanging in Sherborne Park, and ran to Snagg's Harbour, and from there we had a slow hunting run away for Folke Church, on past Butterwick, to Boy's Hill, and Gog and Magog; there he turned back by Holwell Plantations, and, running better for a time, up wind, hounds pressed him rather to

Ferney Down, and so through Alweston ; but after that no more could be done with him, and he carried off his brush as a New Year's Gift—after tantalising us for over two hours.

**January 3rd.—**

A large field assembled at Five Bridges. Mr. Digby Collins was out, having arrived at Henstridge Ash the day before on a flying visit to the Vale ; and, being a border meet, a good many of those who generally hunt with the East Dorset and South Wilts were present also. We found our first fox in Fifehead Cover, but did not leave him there ; nor did he go away alive. The next, from the lower cover, took us up through the Avenue, and to the right, swinging round by the front of the house, crossing the river Stour, up through Stour Provost, and on, sometimes rather fast and pretty straight, to Hayes Copse, where, the earths being open, he went to ground ; which was disappointing, as he was viewed by the Huntsman the other side of the cover, but he turned short and sought refuge underground.

This run occupied twenty-four minutes. Our next fox we found in the Fifehead Withybed, ran him pretty briskly up to the wood, over Hiscock's Farm, back, under the wood, across to the Mill—fording the river this time—to Ashley Plantation, and lost. Then we had a trot of a mile or so to Prior's Down, where we found, and, jumping about three brooks in succession, we headed for Stalbridge; bore to the right there, and ran below Henstridge Station for Bow Brook, across the Sherborne and Shaftesbury Road, for Nyland, where we had more than one fox in front of us. But too many cooks spoil the broth, and they got the best of us. This last gallop, over very pretty country, lasted about forty-five minutes. The weather still cold and scent very indifferent.

**January 5th.—**

The hounds met at Marston Magna, and trotted on the couple of miles or so to Poddimore, where they found, and ran rather well by Kingsdon Village, and through the wood into Somerton Wood, where they lost

him, after a short spin of twenty-four minutes, in the course of which a brook afforded some interest and excitement. In that charming cover of Annis Hills, a favourite one of the late Mr. Digby's, we found our next fox, and rattled him round and round the wood, where, as hounds could not force him out, we reluctantly left him. We went on to the park at Hazelgrove, and, having drawn Sturt Hill and Yarcombe without success, we lighted on him at length near the lodge at Hazelgrove; and a good one he proved, for he ran straight away by West Bampfylde, leaving Queen Camel on the right, and Marston New Cover to the left, over that fine galloping country; here he bent somewhat to the left towards the railway, but without crossing it, heading for Corton Gorse, when he turned to the right, and before long hounds threw up; and after a really pretty ride of forty minutes we were forced to acknowledge, near Rimpton Gulley, that the little Red Rover had the best of us.

**January 6th.—**

At Red Lion, Cheriton, we began to be aware the staff of the B.V. Hounds was getting small by degrees and beautifully less. The Second Whip has been out of sight for some time, disabled by a fall, which has injured his leg. To-day Tom was forced to go home from the meet oppressed by so violent a cold that hounds could not possibly recognise his rate in the gentle whisper which was all he could raise; while the Master has combined both, a very bad cold having supervened on a heavy fall. Therefore it was with no very great surprise that we subsequently learnt the hounds would not go out again this week, as, single-handed—"Alone, unfriended, melancholy," but never "slow"—what could Orbell do? This morning it was frosty and the ground hard, so it was not till twelve o'clock that hounds were put into cover at Holbrook, which, with Waddon Down, was drawn blank. But in a little cover—Dean's Copse—by the side of the road, they found, and, running sharply towards Elscombe, turned just short of it and into

Yarlington Covers, which he thoroughly investigated, but, not caring to stay, he passed the Three Swans on his way to Maperton Wood, up to which point he had been before us for about twenty-six minutes. He went on from here with a fair holding scent, leaving Maperton Gorse on the left, and going through Tennants' Wood, to the far end of Charlton Gorse, whence he made a wide circuit by Templecombe and Charlton Woods, back to Tennants' Wood, where, no doubt, he still is. This run was about fifty minutes, all told. From here we went to Gale's Plantation, and got on a line which led us through Cheriton and Charlton Woods again, to the left of Maperton Gorse and into Tennants' Wood, where he seemed to have got farther ahead of us than he was at starting, though the line was somewhat stale when hounds first took it up, and the scent was bad throughout. The weather was frosty, and very uncertain and changeable, but we must hope for better things next week.

**January 12th.—**

The enforced rest of last week has so far restored matters that Tom was able to be out again, so the hounds put in an appearance at the Cross Keys, at Lydford, but they were still unsupported by the Master. Certainly the weather was not propitious for any one recovering from a severe cold, and there was so much frost on the ground that we did not throw off till quite twelve o'clock, when it was supposed that we could ride with safety. Possibly "the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft," or the presiding genius of the chase, was not of the same opinion, for Naydons, Westwood, Park Wood, and Hornblotton Wood were all drawn blank, and it was not till we got to the outlying wood at Lovington that we found. Our fox, pointing first for North Barrow, crossed the Great Western Railway and made for Wearyall; from here he slightly changed his direction and ran down, with a fair holding scent, to Sparkford Wood, thence over the Castle Cary Road to Chapel Covers, by the brook, and crossed the Wincanton Road, heading

for Cadbury Castle, where hounds were stopped, after a good hunting run of one hour and twenty minutes. A very cold trot home followed, and the tingling of our fingers, the grim look of the sky, and the slight crackling of young ice on the very few puddles in the perfectly hard road, somewhat prepared our minds for the possibility of another spell of rest—predictions which were verified.

**January 17th.—**

Jack Frost took his departure with sufficient decision to enable us to give up watching the thermometer and get into the saddle again. Arrived at Middlemarsh, we were glad to see the Master once more, surrounded by his favourites. Eager for work, the pack soon threw themselves busily into the cover, and almost directly their musical tongues proclaimed a find, and, leaving the big woods close to the White Horse, they were soon seen streaming over the open, parallel to the Butterwick Brook, northwards, till presently they swung sharp to the right, crossing the brook, and pointing for Glanvilles



Wootton. But here our fox must have been headed, for he turned back to Round Chimneys, up the brook again to Little Butterwick, where he turned left and crossed it. And here six of the field had the best of it—three, we may say, by land, and three by water; three jumping it, and three fording it—but the pace was so slow the rest soon caught them up before reaching Holnest Park, which they crossed, and went on to Sweet Hills, through it, and on for Castles, where he ran us out of scent after running about two hours. From here we trotted on to Bide's Gorse, where we found, and, running sharply through Hillfields Covers towards the hills, we whipped off at the foot of them, for the Master well knew they were still slippery. We then went back to the Grange Woods—at least, those who remained did—but a good many of the field went home from here, and did not stay for the busy run in the afternoon of about an hour and a-half through Grange, Gore, and Prince's Wood, and back again, and then on to the open country towards Remedy, and in the direction of Upcerne Wood, before reaching which hounds

were obliged to be stopped, as we again got into a frost-bound country.

**January 19th.—**

There was, happily, no frost to speak of, so we met the hounds at the White Post Gate, at Poyntington, with fair anticipations of sport. At the usual hour the Master moved on, and drew most carefully up Gifford's Combe Farm, bent on the destruction of a fox which was reported to have been far too often in the neighbourhood. But hedges and turnip fields were drawn in vain at first, and it was not till we had got on some little way that a fox was "halloaed" by Harthill and Holway. We got on the line, and ran him back in the direction of Chorlock Hill, over a rough, hilly country, and lost him. In this run we found there was little or no scent, for the lady pack, whose noses are undeniable, could not hold the line a yard. We then drew Trent Barrow, but found in Trent Gully, close by, two fine foxes leaving it in a hurry. We ran fast to the Great Western Railway, where they had a check, the

field hastening, some over the bridge to the right, some by that on the left, to meet in the middle and find that hounds had never crossed the line at all. The fox had gone back towards the gully, but, pulling himself together again, made for the railway, and we were soon running merrily along the east side of it to Adber Village, which we left behind us, pointing for Rimpton. Near here we had to get over the brook by the mill, which required some negotiation, not from its size, but from its awkward banks. However, that accomplished, we saw hounds streaming up the hill again in front of us, bearing rather right-handed, and after a while they then came to a check on the cold ploughs at Sandford Orcas. Recovering the line, we followed his tracks up Harthill again, and on almost to Clatcombe Barn; but he was too clever for us, and really the wonder was how we managed to get such a good two hours' run when so little of that essential material, scent, was to be had. So, leaving off very near where we had begun, we trotted

home in a very cold, still evening, to find our thermometer anywhere but where it should be.

**January 20th.—**

The morning was calm and negative, as usual—no frost, no sun, no rain—in short, no individuality. Arrived at Cheriton, we were sorry to note the Master's absence, occasioned, however, by imperative business, not illness. The first draw was Grove Withybed, and a find, as usual, immediate. The fox broke cover at the farther end, and went away with a will, heading for Rodgrove; but at about the third fence from the cover the Huntsman's horse fell heavily with him, and though he picked himself up, re-mounted, and tried to go on, he was in such evident pain that Lady Theodora Guest, who was in command in the Master's absence, stopped hounds and sent Orbell home at once. The Doctor was fetched from Milborne Port, and from subsequent enquiries we learnt that he had sent him to bed with a broken rib. Undoubtedly we were sorry to lose one day's sport, but were still more sorry for the cause.

**January 22nd.—**

All who could get up early enough, after enjoying the Sherborne Ball over-night, met at Henstridge Ash, and, the meet being half-an-hour later than usual, a large party had rubbed their eyes and gathered together. A great many strangers were out, and also the ex-Master, Sir Richard Glyn. Orbell being *hors de combat*, the Master carried the horn, and, after due law, he trotted on with the hounds to Lady Theodora's Gorse, whence a fox went away on the far side, but, turning short back, he made for the Somerset and Dorset Railway, where he was headed, and ran into hounds' mouths. Nyland was the next draw, and we found in the lower cover, ran through the other covers, and then away over the Cale, by a useful ford, towards Buckhorn Weston, hounds running fast and well, and it took us all we knew not to lose them, while those who had a bad start had to gallop their fastest to keep within sight or hearing. At Buckhorn Weston he turned right-handed, and hounds threw up at the Rectory gates at Kington Magna, where he was marked

to ground in a drain, at the end of about half-an-hour from the find. From here we went to Rodgrove, where we found almost too quickly, as the first whimper was the death-knell of a sleeping fox. Having eaten him, hounds almost as quickly found another and a livelier one, who after a short turn round the cover broke for Marsh Farm; thence, swinging over the little brook, he went past Perrett's Farm, and, making for Grove Withybed, took us over the river Cale, which we had to jump in and out of, for want of a ford, in a very awkward manner, and the First Whip got wet through. Just before reaching the withybed, however, he turned to the right, and by way of Horwood Farm he raced on to Stileway, but did not dwell there an instant; possibly something headed him, for he turned sharply, and, passing Writh, he ran a sort of circle within the line we had come, returning to Stileway again, on over Coneygore Hill, pointing first for Bayford. But soon turning right he went straight to Cucklington Bottom, where he was viewed close in front of hounds, and we thought we should earn a much-needed

respite for our horses, as the severe pace throughout was telling on some of them considerably ; but, on the contrary, our gallant fox improved his pace, and still hounds flew before us, leaving Shanks on the left, heading for Rodgrove, near which we had a momentary check, but they recovered the line in a hedge-row, and were through it and over the lane and up the opposite bank in a moment, and over the pastures at the back of Marsh Farm. Still, on they went, over Clinger Farm and through some invaluable gates, due to the kindness of Mr. Grant Dalton, and here we came to a check, and a fresh fox jumping up deprived the hounds of their well-merited reward, and the Master of the pleasure of handling his fox, for though he perseveringly followed a line by Weston Wood and into Quarr Hollow, he could not account for him, and I believe, had he gone on much further, not one of us could have followed, so pumped were our horses by this really fine, fast run of one hour and forty minutes, over a splendid country, and embracing every kind of fence that the keenest sportsman could wish for. Falls

were numerous, but I am glad to say I did not hear of any severe ones; the country, too, rode beautifully, and it is an unusual treat to us in Dorsetshire to be riding on the top of the ground in January.

**January 24th.—**

They say there is a charm in contrast, and this must have been the charm of Saturday, for the wind had changed, the rain had come, and the scent had gone! A moderate field met the Master at Bagber Bridge, and many enquiries were made about Orbell, who was reported as going on well. Bagber Copse, Queen Copse, and Sir Richard's big gorse and the adjoining spinnies, as well as King's Mill Withybed, were tenantless; but Prior's Down sustained its reputation, and more than one fox left its shelter at the first sound of the horn. We went away with one whose intentions were good, for he led us that lovely line under Stalbridge and by Bellman's Cross to Lady Theodora's Gorse, which it is always a fresh pleasure to ride over, and it was no fault of



his that, the scent being bad, the pace was slow. It took him about thirty minutes to shake off his pursuers, and they were loath to leave him, but he will do better another day, and I fancy he has given us one good turn already. The afternoon was spent in and about Stalbridge Park, where a brace were found in Park Wood; but nothing much could be done with them, and we left them both in the neighbourhood, to wait till called for again.

**January 26th.—**

Owing to Orbell's accident on the 20th he has not been out this week, and the Master has continued to carry the horn, with Tom only to whip in to him. In spite of the showery, uncertain weather a largish field met at Mudford Bridge on Monday, January 26th. After drawing Ashington Spinnies blank, and the wood, hounds found their first fox in Limington Warren, ran towards Mudford, and killed in about five fields; but, as part of the pack followed another line towards Ashington Wood, the Master did not wait to break him up, but got all his hounds

together on that fresh line, which took us through Ashington Wood, swinging right, as if for Vagg, but turned suddenly to the left to Waindles, where a fresh fox jumped up, and thus managed to save the life of his hunted brother and his own, too. This gave time to eat the morning's fox; after which Chilton Cantelo Covers were drawn blank. Not so Marston, for from here a fox broke on the Queen Camel side, bearing right as if for the hills at first, but at the brook he bore to the left and ran up into Corton Gorse. There he hung for some minutes, but hounds forced him out, and up to the top of Corton Hill, which he took one turn round, and then went back to and through the gorse, out again towards Sandford Orcas, running well over the hill to Holdway, and out on the top, heading for Poyntington, and he ran us out of scent close to the White Post Gate, after a hunting run of two hours and three-quarters.

**January 27th.—**

Found us all at the Green Man, at Pulham. Rooksmoor, which seems to have some unfailing

source from which it can always supply foxes as required, sent out a good one to-day, which led us at a great pace towards Lydlinch Common and over it, bearing to the right, and almost to Bagber, on, rather to the left, to Bagber Bridge, crossing the river for Thornhill, and, scent failing rather, we followed him slowly towards Drakes, and lost him. We then found another, which gave us ten minutes' gallop, in Lydlinch Withybed, and went to ground. He was advised to leave, which he did, and crossed the river to Stock, just beyond which hounds pulled him down on the edge of the brook, hounds and fox falling backwards all together into the water in wild confusion, which resulted in the total loss of the fox, as he was sought for and raked for in vain. This ended the day's sport, as a few other covers were drawn blank, and the scent, which was good in the morning, had changed, for which no doubt we have to thank the barometer at home, which was steadily falling.

**January 29th.—**

All the winds of heaven seemed to be

raging round Haddon Lodge this morning, and the few who had managed to get there seemed to appreciate Mr. Serrell's warm welcome even more than usual, and to be specially unwilling to leave his fireside. Plumley was full of foxes, and one or more went merrily up and down the cover, but the wind made it impossible to say precisely what was going on, and it was not till towards the afternoon that we had a gallop, and then a most curious one. Found in a hedgerow close to Doles, ran into and through Doles to Frith, and after one turn round it he went perfectly straight down Landshire Lane as hard as ever he could race, hounds in full cry close after him, running down wind, straight on for a mile and three-quarters to the Somerset and Dorset Railway, where he was probably headed, for he turned to the right into Stalbridge Park, through the cover by the Church, once round the little spinney above the farm, and in another minute hounds, which never left the line an instant, forced him out and killed him handsomely in the open. About half-an-hour's run, and a splendid finish to a most unpromising day.

**January 31st.—**

The meet was at the Kennels, and certainly January wound up with the wildest weather we have had yet ; every sort of storm—hailstorm, thunderstorm, wind and rain were incessant and in their glory. The start was delayed by a hailstorm, and the end accelerated by thunder and lightning. After passing through Bristol's Gorse we went to Compton Castle and found in the Laurels, ran the woods, and on to Littleton Hill, back again through the upper part of the Castle Woods and out on the top, apparently for Bristol's Gorse, but he turned to the left, and we followed him slowly towards Blackford, and hunted over the fallows with little or no scent, severely testing the Master's patience and talents as a huntsman, and right glad were we when, having left Tennants' Wood behind us, hounds ran into and killed him, thus reaping the reward of their very patient hunt of an hour and a-half. Charlton Wood provided another fox, whose tracks we followed by Holton towards Elsombe, where the thunderstorm came on that washed away the scent and wound up the month.

**February 2nd.—**

Began with a continuation of the same storm that had been blowing for more or less three days, but in spite of wind and weather the Master made his appearance with the pack at Sparkford Inn at eleven, and proceeded at once to Sparkford Wood. A quick find and a good fox took us pretty straight to Wearyall; after a turn or two round that cover our quarry broke on the top and circled round the back of Galhampton, and ran to ground near Chapel Covers in forty-five minutes. However, he did not find the rest and safety he had sought underground, for he was bolted without much trouble, and made the best of his way back in the direction he had come, and, profiting no doubt by his previous experience, he made less light of his enemies and put on more pace, and before long ran us out of scent near Galhampton Gullies. The gale went on, though the rain held off a little; still, a very diminishing field followed the Master, as he ran his hounds through Cadbury Covers, the little woods under Cadbury Rings, and Woolston; but sport was over for to-day.

**February 3rd.—**

And a good meet at Westhill Gate. The gale had subsided, and showers only reminded us of the past rough weather. But there was no scent, and not much prospect of a run. A “tally-ho” soon proclaimed a fox in Honeycombe, and he ran the length of the woods, sinking the hill at the extreme end, turned up again, and out again towards Clifton Wood; but there was not scent enough to press him, and near Beerhackett he was given up for lost—or saved, as he would look at it. We next found in Tipples, and, hounds getting away close at him, ran rather merrily to Whitfield. The brook intervened, and, though narrow, afforded scope for a game of *Rouge et Noir*, two gentlemen of those colours cannoning and *Noir* getting in. From Whitfield he turned up over Knighton Gorse, back to Honeycombe and Tipples, and, running nearly the same line again, he afforded another chance of a cold bath in the brook to another gentleman before we went down to Lillington, where the fox somehow mysteriously took himself off and left

us, and by no cast could his line be recovered. Thence to Sherborne Park, and, after running through Lovers' Grove, hounds got on the line of one who had stolen away from North Wootton Copse, and they ran rather well by Snagg's Harbour, away to the park, into and through Goat Hill and Mews Hill, back up the opposite hill to Deadman's Copse, and towards Windmill Hill into the park again, where we lost him in the thick fern of the Deer Park, and left off about five o'clock, after a hard though not brilliant day's work.

**February 5th.—**

Found the Somerset and Dorset line busy with an unusual amount of horse boxes, both at Pylle and Evercreech Stations, for the meet to-day was at Pennard House, where a meet had not been seen for some forty years, and, consequently, it attracted a considerable field, supported by carriages and foot people. Time was given for Mr. and Mrs. Berkley Napier's hospitality to be appreciated, and a move was then made to the Pennard Covers, which lie on



the hill sides. In the steep hanging cover over Pylle a find was proclaimed, and, hounds getting close on the line, ran him sharply back over the brook (where one gentleman got his horse down badly, and I fear he was injured), along the line of the covers and into Cockhill, and to ground there. We then went on to Ditcheat, but did not find again till we got to Milton Wood, and an over-excited field "holloaing" one fox, while the Master was running another in the cover, got half the pack out and spoilt the possibility of a run. The leading hounds could not hold the line at all, and in spite of the Master's patient efforts to redeem the mistake it was too late, though he cast round the Pennard side and back to the wood, but all in vain. Scent, always bad, was getting worse. Our next find was on the top of Creech Hill, in Mr. B. Napier's cover, and we ran him back along the hill down to Milton Wood, and then away over the hill heading for Pink Wood; but the scent was hopeless and the day was getting late, so at 4.30 the Master whipped off about a mile the other side of Bruton.

**February 7th.—**

A finer day and some sunshine welcomed us at Clifton Wood. This large wood, however, was drawn blank. We found in a small cover under Beerhackett and ran towards Thornford, over the hills to Knighton, and back again to the hill-top of Thornford Firs, and towards Honeycombe, here losing the line; but a cast towards Leweston recovered it, and from there we raced to the Rookery, back to and along Honeycombe, and were running into our fox when a pelting storm came down and saved his brush. We found again in Honeycombe, and ran the length of it and back again, but could not account for him; for though the day was better and brighter than many we have had lately, the scent was no better than it should be.

**February 9th.—**

We met at Haydon Lodge, and, leaving the Park in order not to disturb the rabbits which Mr. Digby proposed shooting next day, we soon found ourselves at Hanover, but we found nothing else till we got to Plumley, whence a

fox led us into Tripp's Gorse, and over the lane and up to Deadman's Copse; turning left there, he went for Windmill Hill and Snagg's Harbour, just after which we came to a check, but hounds soon recovered the line, and made it good into Sherborne Park, where, no doubt, much to their surprise, they were stopped, and trotted quietly off to Crackmore. There we found, but Reynard was loth to leave its shelter, and it was not till after considerable dusting round and round the cover that he broke by the Lodge, and went out across the Sherborne Road by the back of Milborne Port, and up to Spurls; here we turned to the right, and ran along the hill to Caundle Brake, and into Frith, round and round which we went for some time, our fox refusing to leave home, and a sharp storm of rain ably assisting him in carrying out his determination. All were glad to see Orbell out again, quite recovered from his heavy fall of nearly three weeks ago.

**February 10th.—**

The staff of the Blackmore Vale has

returned to its original proportions, for besides Orbell, Bob was out again to-day at Zeals Green. We found one fox in Bagmore, but could not do much with him, as there was no scent, and rain imminent. We ran him slowly by the back of Silton, towards Whistly Wood. Found a better one in Diple Withybed, who took us towards Cucklington Village, sank the hill for Stoke Trister, and turned back to Cucklington Wood, and went away heading for Stileway, but turning to the left just short of it he very soon went to ground. We dug and bolted him, and gave him a start, but he was a faint-hearted one, for in three fields he was to ground again in an old farm yard—Mr. Harding's. Spades were again in requisition, but the drains were intricate, and he was not forthcoming. A considerable contingent from Wiltshire was out to-day, with some good men and horses, too, amongst them, as usual.

**February 12th.—**

Mr. Connop welcomed us all at Fifehead Neville, and we were glad to see him ride out

again with the hounds for a bit, recalling bygone days, when he and General Astell—now in India—were amongst our hardest riders. We found a fox directly in Cockrow, who went away like lightning, and led us a race over the East Dorset country to Lockett's, which he left on his left, and those unlucky riders who left it to their right soon found they were wrong, and had to gallop all they knew to catch up the hounds, who, meantime, were carrying a fine head in the direction of Hazelbury Brian, in which village they came to a check, though the fox had been viewed in an orchard. Orbell cast his hounds to the right, and, recovering the line, he made it nearly into Cockrow, but could not mark him in again. We found next in Deadmore, and, having chopped one there, could hardly stay to enjoy it, two hounds having gone on, on a line up the hill. Clapping the pack on, Orbell very soon had the satisfaction of handling his morning fox. He could scarcely travel, and was run into in the middle of a field. He had given us a very pretty thirty minutes' run. We

then went on over that fine open country to Shortwood, whence a good fox took us straight to Brockhampton Withybed, took a turn round it, leaving it very much where he had gone in, and ran by the small Canning Court Covers to Pulham Rectory, and on to Fir Tree Copse, near to which he disappeared, and in spite of "holloas" in every direction, the Master wisely left off, as we had had a good forty-five minutes' run, and, with that added to the morning's run, all who had no second horses, at any rate, had had enough.

**February 14th.—**

A moderate field at Stockbridge Oak, and the sixty or eighty present were reduced to six or eight before we had done. After running through the little Stockbridge Covers we found in Six Acres, ran merrily through Gravel Pits to Longburton, to and through Leweston Park, then up to Conway's Gorse and back to Leweston Park, through the Wood, by Lillington Wood, and on, still fast, up to Thornford, along Honeycombe, up and down it a little, and then

he turned back and went to ground in the bank at the top of Thornford Hill. A pretty gallop of some five-and-thirty minutes over a nice country. We then went down and drew Whitfield; found more than one inhabitant. Ran one of them through both covers, away over those fine pastures, and with fencing enough to satisfy a glutton, almost to Yetminster, then ringing round, he returned to his home at Whitfield, through which hounds hunted him with a most glorious crash of music, finally getting out on the Home Bushes side, leaving Six Acres on his left, on, by the back of Holnest Park, to the right to Sweet Hills, through it, swinging up to Totnel Corner, and then, leaving Castles on the left, he turned towards Chetnole, and went up into the knoll and out again by Scevior's to Cockeram's Plantation, eventually throwing up at Totnel Corner. It was now past five o'clock, and daylight failing, and hounds having been running nearly three hours since they found in Whitfield, the Master gave the word for home. Lord Haldon was out, and Mr. Weatherby, besides our usual field.

**February 16th.—**

The hounds met at the cross roads at North Barrow, and, in spite of its being a thoroughly wet morning, there was a fair field out. We went directly to Alford, and, finding in a small cover, hounds went away at score, heading for Castle Cary, over the hill by Galhampton Gullies, on, over the Castle Cary Allotments, coming to a check on the ploughs beyond after a real race of twenty-two minutes. Orbell cast the pack in vain to try and recover the line, but had to give it up. After touching a weak line in Hadspen we found a fresh fox in Lilywood, and he was quickly raced to ground in Pitcombe Earths; some hounds meantime had run the line of another to Bratton Hill, but sport was over for the day, and from here we went home. The excellent scent in the morning was a great improvement on what we have lately experienced, and, though the rain was soaking us through, there was no wind, and we were able really to enjoy the sharp gallop of the morning.



**February 17th.—**

The White Post Gate, at Poyntington, was the fixture for this date, and we soon found a fox on those steep Clatcombe Hills, and as soon lost him in Holway. Then we drew Corton Gorse blank, which was disappointing, as that fine Somersetshire Vale that we looked down on from the side hill is a very tempting bit, and recalls many a fine run. But to-day that was not to be, though our hearts were again tantalised by a fox found in the Wheat-sheaf Gorse, who gave us all the trouble of climbing and sliding over Corton Hill in the direction of the Vale, merely to lose himself at the bottom of it. Back again to the Wheat-sheaf, and here we had real joy for a short time, as three foxes were on foot, and we expected great things, as the good noses of the dog hounds settled down on one, and they rattled him gaily round and round the gorse. But to no purpose, for though he crossed the lane and tried the plantation opposite he soon returned, and “Who-whoop” proclaimed his retirement to the safe shelter of the main

earths, unluckily left open to receive him. We then had a long walk over a good deal of country, drawing Poyntington Withybed, Milborne Slates, and Ridge all blank. Some of the field went home, as the day was drawing in, but those who persevered were rewarded by a loud "view holloa" from Tom, who viewed a brace away from the little cover of Coombe Hill. Away they went straight as a line to Crackmore, hanging there a few minutes, then out over Sherborne Park to Goathill, sharply through it, and into and through the length of Hanover, across the Queen's highway into Crendles, along the hanging of East Hill and Everlanes. Here he made a sharp turn down to the flat again, leaving the railway on his right, and having run merrily for some five or six fields hounds suddenly threw up at the edge of a stream, and whether Reynard "paddled his own canoe" out of our reach, or what happened, nobody knows, but he certainly left us, hounds and all, staring at nothing at the edge of the brook ; but he did not come back. Orbell cast forward

in vain, but we had run hard for over an hour, and it was nearly half-past five, so it was fairly time to stop, especially for those who, like one gentleman, had come some miles to cover, and had to return home the same way. But railway trains are, as we know, excellent cover hacks.

**February 19th.—**

We met at Buckhorn Weston, and after allowing a little extra law for the arrival of the late Master and Lady Glyn, hounds were taken to draw the Langham and Sandley country, which, with the exception of one fox—chopped, unluckily, in the turnips—proved all blank, as well as Bailey Withybed and Quarr. But we found in the “county double,” and ran a very smart ring of about thirty-five minutes towards Langham and back to Buckhorn Weston, killing him in a garden opposite the Church. We then, having disturbed all that part of the country pretty well, trotted away to Nyland Withybed, so sure a find, that the fox, thoroughly understanding what was required of him, bolted in view before hounds were fairly in, and ran for

his life to Lower Nyland, where he roused his family, and saved himself. We ran about the covers there some minutes, finally getting away with another, and ran him, with a fair holding scent, over Bow Brook, and on towards Sayells Farm, bearing right to Henstridge Marsh, where was a check, but a short one, and we were soon on again, over the brook—where some got over, some in, and some went round—over that pretty flat to Priors Down. Out again and back towards Sayells, having again to cross the brook, whence more wet coats emerged, and wet horses, too, to Higher Nyland, where, scent failing, we were obliged to leave him, well pleased with the hour's sport he had given us.

**February 21st.—**

This morning was cold and frosty, and seemed like a return of winter, but we in our favoured county must not complain, as in Yorkshire hounds were stopped by frost. We met at Holnest Pound, and finding at once in Long Burton Gorse, ran as if for Westhall, but crossed into King's Plantation to Butterwick

and to Broke, thence across the bit of open ground to Withytree Copse, and back to Broke, whence our fox described a curious and uncertain ring by Ferney Down and Folke Church, and then, running rather better up wind, he went to ground in Withytree Copse. But this fox was consistent in his vacillating character throughout, for his running was uncertain and deficient in decision, and his style of going to ground equally incomplete, for he was easily poked out, and the only thing that was certain about him was his end. Having eaten him, hounds were trotted on to Six Acres, where we found another, and ran him down by Stockbridge, over the road to Leweston Wood, down to Lillington Wood, over the fallows to Honeycombe, and lost. This was all slow. We found another in Honeycombe, and left him there.

**February 23rd.—**

These hounds met at Marston Magna, and, after drawing some doubles in Marston Park Farm, we found our first fox in Marston Cover,

and ran him, with an indifferent scent, over the top of Corton Hill and away, on a nice holding line, into some turnips, heading for Compton Castle. Here he jumped up in view, and hounds fairly raced him to Sigwells, and as they were almost catching at him he disappointed them, and with great presence of mind bolted down a hole that led to the main earths, and so gave us the slip. Annis Hills was the next draw, and, responding gamely to the call, produced more foxes than one. Ours ran out in the direction of Babcary Thorns, and, bending from the main road close by the Thorns, described a sort of ring, which took him back to his starting point, where we eventually left him. It was not an agreeable day as regards weather; a strong south-westerly wind blowing hard at times, with a threatening sky.

**February 24th.—**

Found us at Redlynch Gate, whence we proceeded to draw Moorwood; and then we went into the Park, finding in Charlotte Wood,

and thence had a short ring outside the Park, by Roundhill and Moorwood, and eventually he took refuge, like Robin Hood and King Charles, in an oak tree. We then found in Park Wood, and he went out over the wall towards Wincanton, swinging round by Roundhill, heading for Stourton, and, with some turning and twisting, back into Moorwood, where we decided the matter for him once for all by eating him at the end of fifty minutes. From Godmanstone we next had a very pretty, short, sharp spin of twenty minutes; but this fox knew what he was doing, and, having made up his mind to go to ground at Sunny Bank, by Cole Station, as fast as he could, he did so before we could prevent him. We then found a good fox at Leeks Hill, raced to Whaddon Down and to within two fields of Holbrook, where, being headed, he turned sharp back left-handed nearly to the railway, and then, bearing slightly to the right, we lost him near Wincanton. There was very good scent, but this advantage was more than once nearly negatived by the keenness of an over-eager field.

**February 26th.—**

We met at Fontleroi, and began by drawing the usual neighbouring covers blank, but we soon found in the Holts. Ran out by Rowditches, and back again. Then he tried again, and got this time as far as Ashcombe, but, unwilling to leave the home of his youth, he managed to have another look at the Holts, and then ran boldly out by Ashcombe again, on by Tripp's Gorse, to Plumley, ran its length, and back again down to Biddlescombe, on to the Higher Holts, straight through Rowditches, and out into the open below; turning right, he headed for Brickfields and Windmill Hill, to Haydon Vicarage, along the Sherborne Park wall, nearly to North Wootton Copse, then into Sherborne Park, across it, through the dried fern of the Deer Park, past the corner of Goathill, on through Crackmore; and at the Lodge they nearly had him, but he turned sharp over the wall, and got to ground in the precipitous cutting on the north side of the high road, after giving us a good hour's gallop. With this, the day waning, we had to be content.



**February 27th.—**

The Master giving us a by-day this week, we gladly came out and met him at Stalbridge. Some of the field, however, overcome by the attractions of novelty, went to Mr. Portman's meet at Manston, and were rewarded, I believe, by a very good run. We soon moved on, and drew a new cover, viz., a small cow-byre in a field close to Landshire Lane. Reynard was at home, but, not liking his visitors, he bolted without ceremony, making for Stalbridge Station; thence he ran back and below the School, near which he crossed the railway and went to ground in a fence. Being ejected, he went on over the flat at a great pace past Belbin's Farm, up to Bellman's Cross, whence he turned left, and hounds ran into him in the open before he reached the railway, and so ended his hurried career with twenty minutes in the open. We found another in Stalbridge Park, which gave us but a short turn; and then having drawn Pile Lane, Newlease, Doles, and Frith all blank, we found one in Caundle Brake, and ran him with an extremely bad

scent backwards and forwards to Frith, finally stopping hounds towards four o'clock; and so home.

**February 28th.—**

The meet was at the Kennels, and, the day bright and fine and the glass rising, so our anticipations of scent became more cheerful, and were verified by the pace at which hounds dashed after their fox from Mr. Dodington's lower cover, over Stowell Hill and Martin's Wood, through it, pointing for Templecombe Station, but, swinging up through the North Woods, he was heading for Cheriton Wood, when a fresh fox jumped up in an orchard, and hounds took up this line, and ran him sharply through Mr. Dodington's Park, back to Templecombe Wood and West Wood, which they left on their right, and ran straight into Inwood; after two or three turns round the cover, they forced him out at the lower end, and killed him, after a really fast run of just over the hour. We then drew West Wood, North Wood, Stowell, and Mr. Dodington's

upper cover ; but no doubt the noise they had heard in the morning had been regarded by the foxes as notice to quit, and none were at home. Further off it was different, and we found in Charlton Wood ; he ran towards Cheriton Wood first, then, altering his course somewhat, he swung down to the flat below the Kennels, and over the ploughs to Bristol Gorse, and fairly raced to Sigwells. Here, swinging sharp to the left, he went over Corton Beacon for Corton Gorse ; here he bore left, and ran by Weathergrow to Rimpton, where we came to our first real check, at the end of fifty-four minutes ; and virtually this was the end of it, for, though there was a “holloa” on the top of Adber Hill, and hounds made a faint line towards it, and marked it on, but with no certainty, to Trent Barrow, we never fairly recovered his line, and that one little fox, like many another, had the best of us, our seventeen couple of hounds, and all the wisdom and science of Master and men.

**March 2nd.—**

Was a coldish grey day, but without much

of the Lion about it, for the wind was more south than east, and ended in some drops of rain. We met at Chetnole, and, having drawn the Knoll and Scevior's blank, found in Calfhays and ran to Cockeram's Plantation, and thence, with a fair holding scent, through Hilfield parish towards Batcombe, where we rose the hill, and ran nicely by and into East Coppice, turning back in it, and out along the hanging to Upcerne Wood, thence by White Barn to Cerne Park Wood, whence we took him a very smart ring, pointing for Tucking Mill, and back and over the hill to Sydling Clappers. Still he gave us no rest, and back we followed once more to Cerne Park Wood, and then to Elston Hill, and again to Cerne Wood. Here we had a check, and feared we were going to lose him, when a timely "holloa" put us right again, and we worked the line back to Upcerne Wood. Here we viewed him, and by the time he got to the low end of the cover on the Minterne side hounds were ready for him, and at the end of a run of three hours and three minutes they joyfully

devoured their well-earned prey—a big old yellow fox; and rarely, indeed, have we seen the Vale hounds run up on to those hills to kill and eat one there!

**March 3rd.—**

In a soaking rain we went to Warrbridge, and our first find was in Stock Wood, from whence, after the usual turn through Brickells, by which the foxes generally manage to throw out the field, though not the hounds—down he went by Hollow Hill almost to the meet, but, turning right before he got to the bridge, he took us a pretty gallop over those pastures almost to Lydlinch; but he crossed the river just short of it and made for Bagber Gorse; here he turned at Cook's Farm and re-crossed the river to the Boar's Head Orchard. Up to this point the scent was really good, but from here, whether he got too good a start, or how it was we cannot say, but our line back to Brickells was weak and faint, and we could scarcely carry it. Up to the Orchard the time was forty minutes. We then ran through

Thornhill Wood to the Obelisk Cover, in vain, but recovered our friend of the morning in Holtham; hunted him up and down a bit, then by Sterts and Stalbridge Weston into Stalbridge Park, where he was seen, but the rain, I think, stood his friend, and washed out what little scent there was. The glass was falling, too, which is always to the advantage of the fox.

**March 5th.—**

The Red Lion, at Cheriton, saw a largish field. Some strangers were out, too—Mr. Henty, from Sussex, and Mr. Owen, from Ireland—while the South Wilts and Portman packs sent their contingents. Grove Withybed, influenced by the late rains, Makin Hill, and Ash Tree Copse were untenanted, but, being near Lady Day, one of the late tenants was on the move, for we overtook him in the middle of a field by Herridge's Farm, and, running him smartly towards Rodgrove, we again experienced the painful want of a ford in the river Cale, and rode all the way round to the bridge to find the

pack bearing to the left, and heading straight for Stileways, and up Coneygore Hill, where we lost him; the scent was middling, the excitement great, and some of the coats dirtier than at starting. Having drawn Stileways blank, we trotted off to Charlton Musgrove, and drew all the little covers there with the same result. The Master then took us back to Hatherleigh Farm. On it a fox jumped up in a grass field, and led us a pretty little race for a few fields, to Makin Hill, and then on, and much slower, to Horsington; turning short back instead of crossing the Wincanton Road, and, bending down, he went to Herridge's Farm, then very slowly towards Grove Withybed, turning to the right two fields from it, and down again over that fordless river, and to ground in a haystack; but only for a short rest, as he did not wait for us there, but went on towards Cucklington Wood, where he ran us out of scent, after a hunting run of an hour and twenty minutes or more. A lovely warm morning had turned into a rainy evening.

**March 6th.—**

A smaller field met at West Hill Gate, and we went to draw Green Lane, whence a fox had stolen away, and we stole after him ; but with an indifferent scent, which got worse the further we went. Our course lay past Westhall into Leweston Park, out at the Lodge and into it again, and on towards Whitfield. Here it was evident we could do no good with him, so we went back, and, after running the hounds through Snagg's Harbour, we found another fox in North Wootton Copse, who, running through Sherborne Park, sought the wooded shelters of Honeycombe only to die, for he went to ground at the low end of the wood, and was soon bolted and eaten. This last effort of his occupied some twenty-five minutes. We found another in Honeycombe, who ran well to Thorniford, and then away to Lenthay Moor, and to our despair we soon saw hounds fleeing away on the other side of the river, quite out of our reach, the "silver streak" being too much for our jumping powers. All we could do was to gallop to the bridge, while hounds raced to Rocksley, and to



ground in Chorlock Hill, where we came up to them in thirty-five minutes.

**March 7th.—**

A fine sunny morning found a good field assembled at Barnes Cross Roads—always a good meet. We found in Holwell Plantation, and as soon as he was away we felt he meant going, and he raced by the New Inn, Pulliam, on under Castle Hill over Duntish Common to Brockhampton Withybed, in fourteen minutes ; but this was not near enough, so on he kept, still at best pace, bearing right towards Armswell, where he was headed in an orchard, and turned left-handed and ran up to Liscombe Hill in thirty-five minutes, thence to Melcombe Park, where his wily ways, and perhaps the help of his family, enabled him to beat us. But it was as pretty a gallop as we have seen for some time ; and enough for a good many of those who had not the luck to have second horses out. Hounds were then taken to Shortwood, where a find was immediate, and we ran fast to Brockhampton ; turning left there and

running nearly the same line as our morning's fox, he went up the hills, and then ran, very fast, a largish ring in the direction of Plush, and up on the hills we ran him into a little cover, where we thought they had him. It was forty-three minutes up to this, and richly hounds deserved him; but he managed to give them the slip, and ran the big woods down to the Vale again; but scent got worse and worse, and near Mappowder we finally gave him up after a real day of fine sport, with better scent, all told, than we have had for some time.

**March 9th.—**

The meet was at Poddimore, and there was a long fruitless draw through Poddimore, Annis Hill, Babcary Thorus, Camel Hill Hangings, and Yarcombe. We had nearly run through Marston Cover, too, but just at the moment he was wanted a fox came into it, and Tom "holloed" him (or another) away towards Corton and back, and to Corton again, but there was no scent, and, the earths being open in Corton Gorse and in the Wheatsheaf Gorse,

we could come to no terms with the one we found.

**March 10th.—**

A good company met at Purse Caundle, at Mr. Huddleston's picturesque Manor House. We drew the small covers at the back of Ven, but did not find till we got to Crendles, and we ran our fox from there slowly past Purse Caundle to Doles, and lost. Found another in Woodhouse, who made for Plumley and along the lower part, out over the open, straight to the Holts, thence, after a little delay in the cover, where two or three other foxes were viewed, we ran rather prettily towards Caundle Marsh, and hounds killed their fox in the middle of the Brickfields, and ate him at the end of thirty-two minutes. Our next find was in Haydon Gorse, where our friend lost no time in making for Sherborne Park, across it, and up to North Wotton ; leaving it, we went on merrily for Green Lane, where scent failed us, and our fox went on and left us. Another fox jumped up in a wheat field near Snagg's

Harbour, and we followed him a bit about Alveston ; but even the presence of three M.F.H.'s could not improve the scent, and we had to let him be. Besides our own Master, we had Lord Haldon, and the Master of the Lanark and Renfrew, Colonel Buchannan.

**March 12th.—**

This morning found us all at Bagber, with precisely the same weather—east wind and sunshine ; and later in the day the wind seemed a shade warmer. Found a fox near Twin Woods, ran a ring by Mr. Harvey's house, and towards Dalton Elm, and lost. Went then to Yeargrove ; found in the Hanging and ran straight to Twin Wood, and lost him, too. We then drew Queen's Copses blank, and, after a very patient draw, a hound spoke to a fox in the thick recesses of Bagber Gorse, and, another being "holloaed," we thought we were in for something, but it came to nothing ; and we returned to complete the draw at the big gorse, whence meantime our other friend had perhaps stolen away, for no patience or

perseverance could reveal a trace of him. The morning's scurry and this little excitement managed to occasion two or three falls, but muddy coats will soon fail to tell tales, as the ground is getting so hard again. We then went to Stalbridge Common Plantation, where they soon found a fox, who hung some time in the cover, and at length went away very sharp for Drakes, near which Orbell and his horse took different views of a brook, and his stirrup leather a third view, which delayed him, and the Master held hounds on, as they wanted help, and, going on smartly past Jericho, soon left Thornhill Wood on the left, and bore on for Warrbridge Gate and Lydlinch Common, where Orbell rejoined us. They turned right, and passing Stroud Farm, ran into Stock Wood in thirty-five minutes. In Brickell's Wood we viewed him, dead beat, but hounds divided, and the fresh fox saved the old one's life, and we went home about four o'clock or so.

**March 13th.—**

To-day was an advertised by-day, so a

fairish field met hounds at Middlemarsh, at the usual time. Not much prospect of scent to-day, but it had improved in the afternoon yesterday, and might be good to-day. Hounds soon spoke to a fox in Prince's Wood, but were whipped off, heading for the hills by Remedy. Our next took us up over Silver Clump, running rather well, away into the hill country to Holcombe—where we saw the Cattistock field, but did not come into collision with their pack—followed our fox towards Minterne, but took the first opportunity of leaving the Cattistock undisturbed, and returned to Middlemarsh Common. Found, ran through the woods towards the White Horse, and out into the open over Ford's Farm, heading for Eight Acres, on merrily, with the fox in view, and into the woods again; carried a weak line towards Minterne, then turned back and through the woods and common, to Admiral Digby's plantation, but, turning back for the woods again, the Master would have no more of it, and wisely stopped hounds a quarter to five. An unsatisfactory, scentless day.

**March 14th.—**

To-day found a large field, on sport intent, at the Green Man, Pulham. Finding in Pulham Gorses, and galloping thence to Ponting's Gorse, greatly excited our hopes, which, however, were soon calmed down by a very long spell of standing still in Pulham and Holwell Gorses, where were plenty of foxes, but the scent was insufficient to press them, and, though hounds worked admirably, there we had to leave them. We did better in Holwell Plantation, and, running out towards Butterwick, turned right short of it, and ran really well to Buckshaw House, then more slowly to Warry's Plantation, and so back to Holwell Plantations again, at the end of forty-five minutes. A fresh fox got up here, and, saving his relative, defeated us. We drew the New Gorse and Rodmooor blank, but found, in Lanes, a fox whose timely discretion led her to go to ground at Mr. Spicer's, at Bishop's Caundle, where we left her in perfect safety.

**March 16th.—**

We did not have a cheerful beginning, for we met at Zeal's Green, where we drew all the covers blank. There was not a fox or a trace of one in Norwood, Bagmore, Silton Wood, Eddix Hill, Deptly, or Bailey Withybeds. A dreary blank throughout. So the day was well advanced when we found our first in Cucklington Wood. He ran a ring round the cover, and then went up over the hill, and unluckily got on to the cold ploughs, heading for Whistly Wood, when something headed him, and he turned back with his head pointing for his native place, which, no doubt, he reached, for the cold scenting ground he led us over was all in his favour, and not in ours. We gave him up, and drawing a few hedgerows on the way home, were fain to be content with a bad day's sport.

**March 17th.—**

But worse awaited us to-day, when we met at Thorn Coffin; not an exhilarating name, but one well suited to the day, whose records had better be buried in oblivion.



**March 19th.**

Things had not yet assumed a more cheerful aspect, as our meet was at a Gibbet, but when at the worst they generally take a turn, and we had not long left Jack White's historical corner when we found a fox in Yarlington Wood, and ran him up over the hill for Woolston, whence he turned and made straight for Maperton Earths, on to the Gorse, and to Tennants' Wood. Here we had a little delay, but soon went on, either with the hunted one or a fresh find, over Maperton Earths, off to Cheriton Wood, round outside Charlton Gorse, whence he swung back for 'Tennants' Wood, through it and on past Maperton Gorse, back to Yarlington Wood, where we had some very slow and delicate hunting, as scent was very uncertain, but hounds managed to keep on the line, and, having run a sort of loop from the cover and into it again, they forced him out, up over the hill to Dean's Copse; out of this, heading for Waddon Down, and here our fox had lain down in the middle of a fallow to rest, but had not waited quite long

enough, for he got up before hounds could touch him, and he was viewed, dead beat, before them, in Waddon Down, but he managed to crawl into a hedgerow and get to ground in an earth, almost under their eyes, after standing up for two hours and twenty-five minutes. This was timed from what was apparently our second find in the Gorse by Tennants' Wood. Had the scent been just a little better hounds would certainly have been rewarded for their patient hunting; but though they could hold it, and speak to it, on the grass, yet on every fallow up went their heads, and much precious time was necessarily lost.

**March 21st.—**

To-day found a large field at Warrbridge; a great many ladies out. The hounds were put into the Woodbridge Withybed, where, to make sure of something, they at once chopped a fox on their own account. To gratify us, they then ran another from the same cover to Stock Garden, and then, rather prettily, by Sovell's Pit, past Rodmoor, to New Gorse,

where there were two lines, and we swung sharp back over the road to Brickell's Wood, and round it, but he took advantage of us somehow, and "subsequent proceedings interested him no more." We drew Haydon Gorse and Deadmore without success, but found another fox close by, in the little Rooksmoor Cover, who went away as if for Badbury, but turned left and took us over a nice bit of country for Brickell's, touching the corner of it only, and going on past Rodmoor to the New Gorse, when scent changed—not for the better—and we walked on, having gone at a good gallop up to this point, on a stale line to Pulham Gorse, and into Ponting's, but to no purpose. Drew Bulhams blank, and went home. A little scent to-day, when we ran up wind; the wind still very cold, though more north than east, and some threatening of rain, enough to excite our hopes for a change.

**March 23rd.—**

After the snow of Sunday morning we expected a change of weather, but the wind

had bethought itself that we were still in the month of March, and had, therefore, for the sake of consistency, re-settled itself in the north-east. But it was not blowing hard, and there seemed a likelihood of some scent, which the events of the day realised. The meet, a large one, was at Thornford Village, and from there we trotted straight to Whitfield, always a sure find; nor did it fail us to-day. Our fox went away gamely for Tipples first. There he turned, and, coming back to Whitfield, ran from there to Home Bushes and Gordon's Gorse, on to Gallpits, and over Sweethills Common and Totnel Corner, and to Bide's Gorse, in fifty-five minutes from the find. But hounds, I believe, had divided shortly before that, for we went back to a point where Bob had stopped three or four couple, and, recovering the line, went up to the Knoll at Chetnole and out, heading for Melbury Bubb, a sharp turn to the left, and hounds ran into him and killed at the end of two hours and forty minutes. This was a really satisfactory sporting run, the first part fast enough to please the

select few who had the luck to get away with hounds and the pluck to be able to stay with them afterwards; and the latter part displaying considerable scientific hunting on the part of hounds and huntsmen. A reduced field—some without second horses, having cried “Hold, enough!”—followed the Master back to Thornford Hill to draw Ridge Barn, where we found, and went away over the Knighton Gorse into and through Whitfield, pointing for Clifton Wood, but he swung left, and, describing a semi-circle, returned to Whitfield, to Tipples, and again, slowly, to Whitfield, where the Huntsman’s horn had roused the echoes pretty frequently to-day. But this fox was not for us, so we gave it up towards five o’clock. We had several strangers out to-day, including Lord Guildford and Lord Onslow.

**March 24th.—**

We met at Sparkford Inn. A fine morning and no dust, though we had a longish trot along a high road to our first draw, Wearyall, where we soon found a fox, who went out at

the lower end, and made the best of his way to a small cover on the opposite hill, in the direction of Sparkford Wood. He took a short turn round this, hounds pressing him closely, and was viewed away and back into Wearyall, with the musical lady pack in full cry after him; down the cover again, and out again, and, sinking the hill, we had a beautiful gallop over a fine pasture country, with flying fences, to Galhampton Gully, and along the slope very nearly into Castle Cary. Just short of the town, however, he turned left and crossed the Great Western Railway at a point very convenient to his followers, as he went close to the bridge at Dimmer, and thence on straight to the Alford Covers, and through them and on to Lovington. Near here there was a big brook to be negotiated, and several horses and some riders tasted of its waters before they ascended the North Barrow Hill, where, virtually, we lost our fox, though Orbell made some patient casts, without, however, any result. The time was nearly an hour; the pace being good enough generally, though, whenever

there was a check, the over-eager field seemed to think that the recovery of the fox was to be effected by themselves, and not by the noses of the hounds, which latter they also over-rode somewhat too eagerly, sorely trying, one should think, the patience of both Master and Huntsman, besides spoiling their own sport. However, it was a very pretty gallop, and many went home satisfied. We then trotted back to Chappel Cover and ran one of Mr. Bennett's foxes as if for Wearyall, but he swung left-handed along the hangings and into Sparkford Wood, over the railway to Hazelgrove, out of it and again across the railway towards Chappel: he bent, however, to the right, and, passing the railway station, pointed for West Bamfylde; then slowly, on towards Marston Cover, when he was viewed, and ran smartly back to the Great Western Railway, and to ground in the embankment, at the end of an hour and thirty minutes. He was bolted with some trouble, and hounds killed him handsomely and fairly in the open.

**March 26th.—**

A large field, as usual, met at the Five Bridges. Instead of beginning with the home covers we were taken straight to Ashley, and were rewarded by an immediate find, a quick scurry, and a short shrift, for the fox was despatched in the quarry hard by. Back we came to Fifehead; found one in the lower cover, but soon lost him. Then we found another in the withybed, by Mr. Sandford's Farm, who led us a pretty line to and through the upper covers, by Trill Lane, over the River Stour, to Ashley Withybed, and sharply into the Cottage Gardens at Marnhull; here we had a long check, and recovering a cold line, ran him slowly near Lloyd's Farm, over the river again to Sayell's Farm, and lost him. Our next find was in Lady Theodora's Gorse, and this fox took us a real race by Upper Nyland and down to Lower Nyland, and straight as a line to the Parsonage, at Kington Magna, in fifteen minutes. Good going! Then, with a good cry, we followed to the Tunnel Head, near Buckhorn Weston, when, just as hounds were crossing the line, a train



dashed into them round the corner, and caused the death of one fine old hound (Romeo), the others miraculously escaping. The pack went on steadily by Quarr Hollow and into the garden at Shanks' House, and, having got out of the garden with difficulty, being so beat he could hardly jump the wall, our quarry went to ground two fields on, near Clinger Farm. Time fifty-six minutes. We dug and bolted him, and in fifty yards he was to ground again; so spades were to the fore once more, and this time he got well away up through Cucklington Parsonage, and away for Bailey Withybed, where a fresh fox got up and got hounds off the hunted one, but Orbell, having seen the latter walking along the road, quickly set the pack off again, though too late, for we followed him to Quarr Hollow, but never saw him again; and he may be thankful for two of the narrowest escapes fox ever had.

**March 28th.—**

A very picturesque meet in the morning ended in a pretty run in the evening. But first we had some successful hunting in Sherborne

Park. The meet was at Pinford Bridge, and, having gone from there to Green Lane, which was blank, we returned to Snagg's Harbour, where we found and killed almost directly ; and then came to Crackmore. From there we ran a fox by Pinford Farm and a ring on the flat, and back to Crackmore, then along the level between the railway and the wall of the Park towards the old ruins, behind which he tried to cross the railway, but was headed, and returned to the Park, along the wood and to the ruins, and actually up them, one hound (Placable) catching at him over the gateway, from which he fell, and ran into the Castle Gardens, where he was killed. This run was an hour and twenty minutes. After drawing some more small covers, though the afternoon was passing, the Master decided to run hounds through Coombe Hill. A fine fox broke and raced to the back of Milborne Port village, where was a short check on the cold ploughs, but a good forward cast soon enabled hounds to recover the line, which they followed merrily over the little brook under Milborne Port Station, up into the little cover close by, at

the end of Everlanes Hill, and here they began to run hard, and went away at the top of their speed through Mr. Dodington's new cover, on to West Wood, and straight as a die on to Templecombe, keeping the railway on the left, into the village, and, jumping over a wall into the main road, the fox saw nothing for it but to dash into the open door of a cottage, to the terror and consternation of the inmate, who sobbed and feared her last hour was come; when a live fox, followed by seventeen couple of furious and clamorous hounds, filled her small room, soon followed by the Master, who took the fox from the hounds, and after a fine worry in an orchard substantially consoled the still trembling old lady, who, to her dying day, will tell the story and will bless the sport. This was a rare thirty-two minutes, and sent us all home pleased and surprised at so good a week of sport in March.

**March 30th.—**

Found us all at eleven o'clock at the Kennels, whence we trotted straight to Compton Castle, and, thanks to Mr. Rome, found a fox

there as soon as hounds were put into cover. He went away by Round Hill for Littleton and then to Sigwells, but without waiting there he made his way on to Corton Hill, and down it, leaving Corton Gorse on his left to Mr. Harding's farm, where we had a check—very convenient for some of us who were behind, as Corton Hill is not always a pleasant place to slide and scramble down in a hurry. The scent, though fair, was not brilliant, and hounds could not hit it off again ; so, having had news of him, the Master trotted off to Cadbury Rings, where we found our friend afresh, and for seventeen minutes ran him again towards Sparkford Inn and killed him, at the end of, all told, an hour and fifteen minutes. A “holloa” here took us on to another fox, whom we ran to Sigwells and killed. We drew then some more covers—Bristol Gorse, the Wheatsheaf, and so on—but did not find till we got to Charlton Wood, from which we ran a ring by Charlton Gorse and back, and then to Cheriton and Templecombe Woods, to Westwood, and towards Stowell Quarry, and lost, about fifty minutes

from the find. Mr. and Mrs. Digby Collins were out.

**March 31st.—**

A beautiful morning found a goodly assemblage at Mr. Connop's hospitable door, at Fifehead Neville, whence, after a little law, we moved on to Cockrow, and soon disturbed a fox, who, not wishing to see more of us, set off at once, best pace, in the opposite direction, and we after him, for Kitford, through Woolland Cover, heading for the hills, which we reached in fifteen minutes; then on through Stoke Wake, over Bulbarrow, and Rawlesbury, to one of the covers outside Melcombe Park, in forty-seven minutes; here he doubled back into the wood and was lost — a pretty gallop, which involved many falls, no injuries, and much pleasure. Returning through Mappowder we had rather a long trot back to Badbury, whose only tenant was a large cat, and to Deadmore, where we found our next fox, who ran rather well past Cockrow, and on to Hazelbury Common, where he left us. Back to Deadmore,

but hounds were hardly in when a "holloa" told us of a fox in a field between it and Rooksmoor. Orbell caught up his hounds and galloped to it, and, settling on the line, they ran through Rooksmoor and Charity Gorse, back to Deadmore Common, over it, by Haydon Gorse, heading for Stock; but, turning left, he was soon back at Deadmore, where, after a turn round the common, he was finally killed, after leading us a merry run of about an hour.

**April 2nd.—**

We went to Haydon Lodge, but, as one paper had advertised it Haddon Lodge, there were horses and grooms all over the country. Some of the mis-informed were set right by the well-informed, and ten minutes' law at the meet put matters straight. Haydon Gorse was drawn blank, also the Windmill and Ashcombe, but a brace awaited us in Ferney Down, and hounds took one out by the lower end of the cover, enabling us to avail ourselves of a bridge over the brook; on to Withy Tree Copse in a not very straight course to Broke, and on to Folke,

where, having had sufficient exercise for the morning, our fox discreetly retired into a china cupboard in Farmer Adams' kitchen, and we, as discreetly, left her. We soon found another in Marsh Copse, and ran rather nicely over Portdown Hill, and, fording the brook near Pole Bridge, we left Ryall Gorse on our left, and went on to Major Warry's house and lost, heading for Holwell Plantations. We then trotted back to Tripps Gorse, where he was at home, and went away with a will; and for the first fifteen minutes up to Haydon Gorse, by way of Ashcombe and the Caundle Marsh brickfields, it was all we could do to keep hounds in sight at all. From here he bore to his left to Haydon Vicarage garden, on along the edge of the brook, and then up the hill towards the Holts, but turned down instead of going into them, right-handed, passing Marsh Court, and on for Marsh Copse, where he turned sharp and short, and hounds ran into and killed him handsomely — time thirty-six minutes. This was a good finish to our sport for the day, for, though we found and ran another slowly from a little cover near the

Holts, scent failed as the evening drew on, and we went home, leaving hounds near Plumley.

**April 4th.—**

A lovely day, and a good field met at Holnest Pound. Passing the house, all the covers around it were drawn, and we shortly found a fox in a small cover not far from Six Acres, but the name of it I do not know. He ran well through Gordon's Gorse over Sweethill's Common to Admiral Digby's plantation, where we had him in view, and thought hounds must surely have him, when he foiled them by a sharp turn, and raced on over Middlemarsh Common and into the Grange Woods, in twenty-three minutes from the find. Here we had a long check, which, in spite of a careful and wide cast in the wood, resulted in his saving his brush and in our going back to very near the spot where we found him. In Longburton Gorse we found a relative or friend of his, who gave us a very pretty seventeen minutes' gallop over the open to Butterwick and through the cover, racing into Broke, where



hounds could not carry the scent, which to-day was catchy and uncertain. So, after trying to pick out a line in the direction of Six Acres, we had to let him be. Drew Home Bushes blank, but from Bailey Ridge came out two foxes; one of which we ran sharply through both Whitfields and to Conway's Gorse in sixteen minutes. Here he got into a ditch, but though hounds were close at him he managed to give them the slip; and though we ran him a bit further by Leweston to Conway's Gorse and Leweston again for an hour and fifteen minutes, all told, he, too, had the best of it, and his escape was further promoted by a sheep dog, who gave his advice unmasked.

**April 6th.—**

Hounds being thrown into Honeycombe soon found a fox, and ran a very smart fifteen minutes by Leweston to Beerhacket Hill, and then, more slowly, through Thornford Firs and along into Honeycombe; down the hill as if for Lenthay, and then up and along Honeycombe, Lover's Grove, and on for North Wootton Copse;

thence we went on by the Park to Haydon Copse and by Ashcombe, and back to Snagg's Harbour, and lost. This was cheery and pleasant, and there seemed a fair amount of scent; but there was little or none in the afternoon, two hours of which we spent running rings, and changing foxes, between Ridgestall, Honeycombe, and Knighton Gorse, and finally ran one to ground, who stayed there, for the earth he had selected was too large and deep to dig.

**April 7th.—**

We met at Jack White's Gibbet, and, having drawn Hadspen blank, we found a fox in Lily Wood and ran him towards Hadspen, and over Mr. Maidment's hill, sharp back to Yarlington, and lost. We found another in Yarlington, but did nothing with him; and, after drawing another cover or two, we found a real good one under Waddon Down, and ran him with a burning scent away to Yarlington; swinging round to Elscombe, leaving it on the right, and on towards Wincanton, and to

ground near Verrington in twenty-two minutes, and very rapidly they passed. But we had not done with him yet, for he was soon bolted, and he ran hard, by Waddon Down and straight on, passing Lily Wood and Bratton Hill, and on for Yarlington Church; and hounds ran into him in the open on Merryland, between North Close and Galhampton, after fifty as good minutes as any one would wish to ride to.

**April 9th.—**

From Stalbridge Park, where we met, we went first to Prior's Down, where we soon found, and almost as soon killed. Found the next in Stalbridge Park Wood, and after a ring round it our fox broke, and made his way over the Park to Frith Wood, along the hangings and back into the Park again, thence away, heading for Harputts, through Sturts and into Holtham; out as if for Jericho, where we had a first momentary check, but a "holloa" towards Warrbridge put us on again, and we ran very

prettily along the river side to Rolf's Mill and Lane's, leaving it on our right; and still running merrily, we went on, under Bishop's Caundle, following the course of the river to Ryall's Gorse; then crossed it by the ford at Buckshaw Pit, where we viewed him. From here our course continued towards Bulhams, which we left behind us, and, passing Mr. English's house at Holwell, we headed for the Holwell Gorses, but, bending left round the edge of Ranksborough Gorse, hounds raced their fox in view to the mill and to the water's edge, from which point he was never seen again, nor could any cast recover his line, for he had met a watery grave, defrauding hounds of their well-deserved prey, which they had followed, with only two slight checks, for an hour and thirty-two minutes. It was just two fields from the mill that Lady Theodora Guest had the misfortune to break her leg in a collision with a gate post, against which her horse swerved in galloping through a gateway; and she immediately rode home, some nine miles off.

April 11th. —

This morning found us at Middlemarsh, and there we spent the morning after two foxes who did not mean to be caught, and the absence of scent being greatly in their favour, we left them there about two o'clock ; and, having run through Berkeley Gorses, we found in Butterwick. Ran out on the Buckshaw side and in again, and away for Longburton and Sweethills, and round by Holnest Park, back to Berkeley Gorse in twenty minutes ; good going. Out from there to Glanvilles Wooton and up to Newland's Farm by Pulham Wake. Here he doubled sharp round a cottage and went up into Mr. Dale's cover, Haywood ; round and round it, hounds catching at their fox. Finally they forced him out, and though they were close at his brush he managed to save it by going to ground near the brook behind Round Chimneys Farm. The total time was an hour and twenty-eight minutes, of which thirty or thirty-five were excessively fast, as the scent was burning in the open, though it had been bad in the woods in the morning.

April 13th.—

The meet was the always popular one of Pulham, and the road in front of the Green Man was soon as crowded as usual. We moved on to Ranksborough Gorse, where nobody was at home; but Pulham Gorse was tenanted, as the music of the dog hounds soon proclaimed, and they quickly pushed him out and ran him smartly to the other gorse, and thence made a ring towards the Green Man, losing their fox after twenty minutes' twisting hunting. Our next run was from Humber Wood (after calling at Holwell Plantations and Short Wood), and from here he ran towards Ranksborough, and then away over the King's Stag Mill, and they killed him, in the pigsty of the farm beyond, in thirty-four minutes. Then drew Brickells and found two there. We got away with one of them over Stock Park to Woodbridge Withybed, and on, heading for Bullhams, which we left on our right, and followed the line very slowly through New Gorse and out in the direction of Pulham Gorses, and made it good

into Ranksborough; but by that time—nearly five o'clock—we could do no more.

**April 14th.—**

Having met at Nether Compton we drew the Compton Home Cover in vain, but found in Rocksley and ran down towards Trent Barrow and along the stream towards Nether Compton; turning right he led us on to Compton Park and away for Trent Covers, whence he was somehow headed back, and then he ran hard, by the side of the railway, and finally up again into Compton Wood; and from here, with failing scent, we followed him on towards Chorlock Hill, ran somewhat of the same ring again, and lost. A confusion of “holloas” ensued; Orbell took the pack to one, hoping to regain his lost victim, and almost immediately ran into and killed a fox, close to Trent Barrow. Our friend of the morning probably made good his escape, for, though hounds were run through Rocksley and Compton a second time, they never spoke to him again. Trent Covers, the Gully, and Hack Hill were all blank, and we

rode home in the usual still, calm, cool, not to say cold, east windy weather that we are now accustomed to. Never was the Spring so late, and never were the wild flowers, of which Dorsetshire has generally such reason to be proud, so poor and miserable.

**April 16th.—**

We met at Redlynch Gate, and, having drawn Moor Wood, we found and chopped an old dog fox in Charlotte's Plantation. Then found another, of the opposite sex, who gave us a short gallop of fifteen minutes in the direction of Charlton Musgrove and to ground by the farmhouse at Shalford, where her sex secured her safety. We then had a long slow hunting run from the Vicarage Copse towards Bratton, Hadspen, round Leek's Hill, and on as if for Lily Wood, down into the Yarlington Covers, in which he took a turn or two before breaking in the Maperton direction, then swung back up the hills as if for Elscombe, and finally got to ground on Little Clapton Farm, at the end of over an hour and-a-half's



good hunting. To-day we noticed the first swallows.

**April 18th.—**

Seemed really like a Summer's day—cloudless sunshine and hardly any wind—so we had a pleasant trot to Totnel Corner. Two or three covers at Chetnole having been drawn, we found a good fox in Fifett's Gorse, near Totnel, and, running for Sweethills, bore left to Home Bushes and Bailey Ridge, and then ran really well to Whitfield, where our first check took place at the end of seventeen minutes. But the clever little ladies soon recovered the line and carried it out through Knighton Gorse, and up the hill to Leweston Wood, where they hung for a minute or two, but not more ; and we were soon out on the Stockbridge side and through the Belt, on through Six Acres and by Gravel Pits, very fast, to Sweethill Gorse again. But on went fox and hounds and leading horses through the gorse, and, bearing back, left Admiral Digby's Plantation on the right, and

four fields on from here hounds ran handsomely into their fox, killing him in the open, after a really pleasant gallop over a good bit of country, of about an hour and twenty minutes. Nearly all of us, horses included, had had enough, and but few followed the Master as he went to draw Whitfield, from whence he had a short run; but the burning scent of the morning did not serve him in the evening.

**April 20th.—**

We had not much sport from the Red Lion, Cheriton. There was absolutely no scent, and, though hounds raced for a few minutes in the afternoon, when running from Maperton Wood to near Charlton Wood, they threw up directly they got there, and the rest of the day was not worth recording.

**April 21st.—**

We were at Ven, and sad it is to see that once hospitable house still closed. We found our fox in Hanover, and ran him out to Plumley and by the edge of Tripp's Gorse back to Hanover,

where he seemed to hang, for, though he went out, he was back again directly, and then made his way on to Goathill, where, under the Park wall, we killed him. Our next was found in Spurls Thorns, and we ran him to Inwood, thence over to Yenston, and nearly to Templecombe, hunting him well into West Wood, past Mr. Dodington's lower new cover to Everlanes, and down the hill; and here we had a check, and made a weak line back to Stowell village, where we could make no more of him, and stopped, after having run him well at times, and at times uncertainly, owing to catchy scent, for over an hour and twenty minutes. It was hot to-day like Summer.

**April 23rd.—**

The meet was at Walton Elm, near Marnhull. We did not find in Spar Copse, but there were a brace in Twin Wood. Having settled down on the right one we ran away very nicely by Sturminster Union towards Manston Copse, where we swung sharp left, and in nineteen minutes were back again

at Hinton, losing our fox near Mr. Harvey's house in consequence of a heavy shower, which cooled the air and damped our ardour. We trotted off from here to Stalbridge Common Plantation, which has given us a good run before now this season, but was not yet over-taxed, for we had not stood long at the cross-roads ere we saw a fine-looking fox steal away for Hargrove Farm, and away we went after him, past the farm, on under Thornhill, heading for Warrbridge, crossing the river by an "indifferent bad" ford, and pointing for Lydlinch; leaving Bagber on the left they went on with a great head by Lydlinch Withybed and past Haydon Gorse, towards Badbury and into Deadmore Common, where he ran a short ring; but, being hard pressed by the hounds, who were running as if glued to their fox, he went away again in the direction of Brickles, which he left close on his right; his end, though, was near, for hounds ran into and killed him in the very small spinney between it and Six Mead. The run was a race, and but few were in it, though those who

were, had to do all they knew to keep close to hounds; and all who know the country will appreciate the pace by the time, which was thirty-two minutes from find to finish.

**April 25th.—**

From Holnest Pound we went to Longburton Gorse and found there, but had no run to speak of; but from Broke we ran away nicely over the brook towards Ferney Down, past it to Fontleroi, and up the hill into the Holts; after a turn there, we went towards Bishop's Caundle Brake, and back again past the hanging Holts to Marsh Copse, and on to Withy Tree Copse, and lost, after forty minutes' very pretty hunting. We afterwards had a very good thirty-five minutes from King's Plantation to Broke, up to the high road from Sherborne to Dorchester, from which he turned back right-handed, past the edge of Broke, and on for Fontleroi, near which we lost him. A very wild stormy day, with cold showers. After running hounds through some of the Sherborne Park Covers in vain the Master gave the word for home.

April 27th.—

We met at Westhill Gate and found in Honeycombe. There were two foxes—one was chopped, and we ran the other through the wood out past the meet, through Green Lane, and over the brook towards Folke, and thence to Broke, where he twisted about the fields a bit between it and Ferney Down; here we got a view at him, and ran nicely as if for Butterwick, but, turning right, he came back to Broke, where he hung some minutes, and we finally lost him after having hunted him for forty minutes, more or less. We drew some of the Sherborne Park Covers next, finding in Crackmore. He came away towards Ven, into the Withybed, and about the Shrubberies, and was left there. It was a day in which it was a pleasure to be out, with scent enough to hunt, though not to kill; but the enjoyment was marred by the news that Lord Digby had had a fall in Butterwick and had broken a rib.

April 28th.—

Found us all at Jack White's Gibbet,

whence we trotted straight to Yarlinton, where we found a fox who gave us a short turn, with an indifferent scent, which died away to nothing on the fallows. Did better from Elscombe, whence we ran prettily to Dean's Copse, out for Whaddon Down, which we left on our left, running well alongside the gully down to Leek's Hill, out of it, and along the railway up into Underwood in Shepton Montague, where some got a view at him; from here he ran back towards Bratton Gully, and up it, closely pressed by one of the active lady hounds, who nearly got him, and forced him just over the road up Bratton Hill, where she and the rest of the pack got hold of and soon despatched him, after a very pretty gallop of forty minutes. And just in time, for it began to rain directly after, and if it had begun sooner the end of this tale, and of the fox's brush, might have been different.

**April 30th.—**

Found one in Clifton Wood Cover, who was killed in the open after a deal of hunting in the cover. Thence to Ridgestall, which was blank;

but we went to a “holloa” on Beerhacket Hill, and had an exceedingly pretty and fast gallop of thirty minutes from here, by way of Conway’s Gorse and Whitfield to Tipples and Yetminster, and lost him at the entrance of Ryme, over a beautiful line of country.

**May 1st.—**

Was anything but one’s idea of May Day, a thick rain pervading everything. A good field, however, assembled at Warrbridge Gate ; but the day’s sport was nothing, and for want of scent—not of foxes—we could not kill a May fox to-day. We found one in Brickles and another in Woodbridge Withybed, and walked after both—after the latter for some 40 minutes—to Deadmore Common. Found another in Stalbridge Park Wood, and they ran merrily in cover, but could do nothing out of it, though we followed him slowly out of the Park near the old turnpike and a little way along the fields in the direction of Toomer, but could make nothing of it, so went home, as no doubt the fox did also.



**May 4th.—**

The meet was at Stourton Inn, and a very good hunting run of an hour and forty minutes followed, but, being almost entirely woodland, would be difficult to describe accurately.

**May 7th.—**

From Middlemarsh a good May fox came to hand in the woods. He was found in Gore Wood, and, after clinging to the wood for some time, he tried the open for some four or five fields, but fearing sunstroke, no doubt, hastened back to the shade of the wood and met his fate. The Hon. Theresa Digby was out, with a good account of her father; Mr. Clayton, Mr. Holford, and a very few more.

So ended the Season of 1884-5. Sixty-three brace were killed, besides many to ground. The season had been an open one, though for a week or more in January hounds were not out. Tom Jordan and Bob Cotesworth left at the end of the season, and Orbell went on till July, when his health suddenly gave way, and he was forced to resign, nor was it long before death closed his career.

## NOVEMBER, 1885.

*Huntsman*      ...      ...      E. HAYNES.



*1st Whipper-in* ...      ...      E. TEECE.

*2nd Whipper-in*      ...      C. FOX.

November 2nd, 1885.—

The opening meet of the Blackmore Vale Hounds was at the Kennels, Charlton Horethorne. The morning was not bright, and by eleven o'clock a steady rain was falling. A fair number, however, assembled to do honour to the day, and to partake of the refreshments spread out in the Huntsman's house; after which a move was made to the yard, and horses were mounted. The Master, who, with Lady Theodora Guest, had arrived early, gave plenty of time, but when all seemed satisfied he made a start, and the hounds came out in the charge of the new huntsman, E. Haynes, and the two new whips, E. Teece and Charles Fox. Charlton Gorse was drawn blank, and some more small covers near; indeed, we did not find till we got to Wheatsheaf Gorse, where a brace were on foot, and one of them soon surrendered his life and brush. After this another was found in Holway, and he led us, with little or no scent, to Hack Hill, towards Sherborne Butts, and eventually back to Holway, where he was lost. The day, though not cold, was wet, and scent thoroughly bad;

if a thing can be said to be bad when it is not there !

**November 3rd.—**

We met at Nether Compton in unmitigated rain. We found a fox in Major Goodden's cover, and ran sharply to Rocksley, and through the allotments back in the direction of where he sprang from, after which we saw no more of him; but, finding a bob-brushed relative of his in the withybed near the railway, we ran to Potters Lease, where he went to ground. We did not find again, though hounds were run through Trent Barrow and the Gully, but who could expect a fox to be about on such a day?

**November 4th.—**

To-day the point was Stourton Inn, for the big woods; the Master carrying the horn himself, which I understood he has been doing twice a week since cub hunting began, which event took place on August 31st, so that hunting, which to us appears to have just begun, can be no novelty to him. But to return to this

morning's work. Hounds spoke to their fox just above the Shrubberies, where two were on foot; they ran one of them very hard past the Nunnery to the earths under the Tower, where they hung a little, but, being cast forward, they ran over the earths and on, carrying a good head, into King's Wood. Here he took a turn, and, after exhibiting some indecision, he was pushed on into Witham Wood; from whence he turned back, and went through West End Wood and out into the open below, affording his pursuers—to wit, Lord Cork, Lady Isabel Boyle, and Mr. Turner—a pretty gallop back to Alfred's Tower, and into the woods, where, after some patient hunting, he was left for another day. The Master then took his hounds to Bagmore, where a fox was found, but they could make nothing of him.

**November 5th.—**

Found a small field at Yarlington House (Mr. Rogers'). Very heavy hailstorms were the feature of the day, and, as the glass was falling, not much was to be hoped in the way of sport.

There was no lack of foxes, but, beyond running round the home covers and to ground at Wolston, there is not much to record. We found a second fox at Lily Wood, who gave us a short turn by Holton and Maperton, and then took himself off.

**November 6th.—**

The meet was fixed for Purse Caundle Manor House, but, out of deference to Mrs. Huddleston's newly-arrived son and heir, it took place at the cross roads hard by. We found in Purse Caundle Brake, and ran sharply to Frith, where he dwelt a little, finally breaking cover for Doles, and we had a pretty little gallop, with easy fencing, by way of Pile Lane and the meadows beyond it, circling back to Doles, and again into Frith, then round Frith Farm; but he was too good for us, and had it all his own way. There was, singularly, little scent in Stalbridge Park, which we drew without finding, though there was a rumour of a fox here and there. Church Copse was tenantless, but he was at home when we called at Harputts, and took us merrily to Church Copse and Pile

Lane, finally going to ground under the road near Mr. A'Barrow's farm; but he was soon dislodged and eaten.

**November 7th.—**

A picturesque meet in front of the stately old house of Montacute. A largish field of horse and foot and carriages had assembled when the Master and Lady Theodora arrived with the hounds. A few minutes were allowed for greeting and refreshments, and we then trotted quietly into the cover on the hillside, where the music of the Master's pack soon proclaimed a find. In two minutes more the First Whip waved his cap on the open ground above, and we found ourselves racing to catch hounds, who were running a bob-brushed fox with a scent we have not seen the like of all this week. Right on we went into a steep cover, and here he went to ground, or scent, in the carpet of leaves, failed. While trying to account for him, hounds put up another, and, after some pretty hunting, he was run into and killed. The foot people took great interest in his obsequies and the ceremonies

attendant, and no wonder, for, if report speaks true, no fox has been broken up at Montacute for one and twenty years. Many can never have seen the sight before, and I fancy there was a general feeling that the enjoyment was due to Mr. Phelip's good nature and care in preserving foxes, for regret was frequently expressed that he was not riding with us and sharing the excitement of a musical chorus of hounds and horn on a lovely day in a glorious woodland country. St. Michael's Mound was drawn blank, also Norton and Woodhouse. Days are shortening now, and it was a long way home, so, having satisfactorily roused the unaccustomed echoes on the hills of Montacute, the Master made the best of his way home.

**November 9th.—**

We met at Middlemarsh, and, finding almost directly on the common, ran hard the length of the wood, and after much perseverance and some splendid hunting we were close at him in a corner of the cover, and thought we should get him; but the fox, unluckily, possessed as



much perseverance as we did, and insisted on preserving his brush, which, aided by failing daylight, he succeeded in doing, though it was not till half-past four that the Master could bring himself to leave him and go home.

**November 10th.—**

Many started early and reached Inwood by eleven o'clock, so as to take advantage of the magic word breakfast, which in this case meant a good substantial meal in the dining-room, where forty sat down at a time and enjoyed themselves. I am told there were over two hundred horsemen assembled—to be accurate, two hundred and thirty-two—including ladies, and I can believe it, for there was truly a large assembly. The Master and Lady Theodora gave a cordial welcome and plenty of time, and all were pleased to notice the Marchioness of Westminster at a window enjoying the scene. We hear she celebrated her eighty-eighth birthday on Sunday. All the well-known faces in this hunt were there, and the Portman and South Wilts were also represented in force.

Amongst them were Lord Howth, Mr. Surtees (of Purse Caundle, and his daughter), Major Allen, Mr. B. Napier, Miss Serrell, Captain Bridges (from Fifehead), Mr. Clayton, Mr. Rome (from Compton Castle), Mr. Martin (from Ven), Mr. H. Neville and his brother, and so on. After a time, when all were again mounted, the wood was drawn, and, strangely enough, the arrival of the two hundred had not shaken the confidence of the inmates, for five foxes went out in one direction, while we followed another across the Sherborne Road heading for Stalbridge Park, but near the wall we lost. Found our next in the Lower Spurles Cover, and ran him into Stalbridge Park, where, perhaps, we changed, for we could not make much more of him, though we followed a doubtful line back again to Inwood. Then went back to Spurles, finding in the upper cover, and soon killed. This was really the second fox we killed to-day, for the hounds chopped one in Inwood the first moment they went in. Lady Theodora's Gorse was run through, and probably a fox had been there shortly before, but they

were on the alert by this time, and he did not wait for us. The day was fine and calm, but scent only middling.

**November 11th.—**

Found the Master and his pack at Cogley at the usual hour. A good many foxes were soon on foot, and it was a difficult matter to settle down to any one without changing. Six or seven there were at least, and the hounds finally stuck well to one, running him to ground in the cover hedge by the water. After digging a short time he accepted the notice to quit, and bolted, taking the hounds another sharp scurry of twenty minutes before he laid down his life in the same brook a little higher up.

**November 12th.—**

A largish meet at Chetnole, including some strangers. We found a fox in the knoll and ran him fast up the hill towards Melbury, left Lord Ilchester's Park on our left, and went on, carrying a good head through Melbury Osmond and Lewcombe, and then, the hounds running

rather slower, we went over a stiff gully country close to Coker Wood, and bore up to Pen. Here we probably changed, for a colder scent led us further into the Cattistock country, and at the end of two hours and forty minutes the Master gave the word for home, and a long way off that was, for some of us.

**November 13th.—**

The meet had been fixed for Warrbridge, but owing to illness in the dog pack the hounds did not hunt.

**November 14th.—**

A small and select party met at Hunter's Lodge; even the Master was absent owing to a cold. Lady Theodora, therefore, was in command. Hounds were taken straight to Charlton Musgrove, and found a brace of foxes in the cover opposite the house; they settled down on one, and ran him very fast up the hill, and then, left-handed as fast as they could race, to Pen Forest, through the woods up to the main earths, down again and round the wood till

he went to ground in Cockroad, whence, after some hard work with a spade, the hounds dislodged and ate him. Found another on Mr. Corp's farm, in Charlton Musgrove; raced him for three minutes, when he ran to ground in his nursery, the earths where he was bred being unluckily left open for his reception, so there we left him for the present.

**November 16th.—**

Hounds met at Lattiford House, where Mr. Dendy and his family had a kind word for all, and something stronger for those who liked it. There was a good field out, as we saw by the long line that trotted down the lane to Grove Withybed, our first draw, but the fox who had been seen there in the morning had moved on; and we soon found him, and his brother, no doubt, in Makin Hill, for two foxes went away from there, one north, one south. We followed the former, and after he had taken a turn backwards and forwards over the little brooks to test the mettle of his pursuers, he put his head straight for Holbrook,

over a nice line of country; touching Wincanton, and leaving it on our right, he led us straight on, through Holbrook and Waddon Down to Jack White's Gibbet, and here we practically lost him at the end of a pretty gallop of thirty-four minutes. We marked a feeble line towards Bratton House, but in vain; and tried to persuade ourselves he had gone to ground near Dean's Copse, but hounds would not endorse that suggestion, so he was given up; and we soon found ourselves at Elscombe, whence a whole family of foxes radiated in different directions, and the last, who stayed at home too long for his own good, was chopped and eaten. Hounds were then laid on the line of another, who took them a short ring in the direction of Holton, but soon turned back towards the cover and retired out of sight in a sandy hole, whence he was soon ejected and killed. A cold day, so it was real luck getting the gallop in the morning.

**November 17th.—**

Found us at Mudford Bridge. Our necessary

friend was at home in Ashington Wood, and remained there, for scent was so bad the hounds could not push him out. Limington Warren and Chilthorne Domer proved blank, but we marked a fox to ground in Vagg, and ran slowly after another past the Rifle Butts to Brimsmore Tree, and the lower end of Stone Farm into Ashington, and lost.

**November 18th.—**

This date found us at Middledmarsh. We found our fox in Gore Wood, and ran about it at a foot's pace, getting out once for High Stoy, then to Gore Wood again, and out once more towards Silver Clump, but the foxes were bound to have it all their own way, and might have been made of wood for all the scent they left behind them.

**November 19th.—**

The meet was at Bagber Cross-roads. The wind and glass being exactly as they had been on the previous days—the former an ungenial east—there was no improvement in scent, and,

our hopes not being raised, could not be disappointed. We found a fox in Twin Wood, and hunted him slowly past Yeargrove to King's Mill, and lost. Then drew King's Mill Withybed blank, but had better luck at Yeargrove, carrying a bad line back to Twin Wood, thence between it and the river, and backwards and forwards once more. Spar Copse was blank, but we found in Ashley Plantation; hounds being apparently close at him, for they ran hard to Moorside, and there, mysteriously, lost.

**November 20th.—**

We met at Shanks House, and Mr. Grant Dalton's picturesque residence was enlivened at eleven o'clock by a group of hounds, and horses, and carriages. The former soon moved on to Cucklington Wood, where they found, and ran up over the hill and to ground, whence we dug and killed a very old fox. Stoke Trister hangings proved blank, but we were better off in Frith; from this cover we described a double circle Stoke Trister way, finally running



him to ground in the main earths, where we did not attempt to disturb him. No scent, and a tendency to rain.

**November 21st.—**

A long journey to Butleigh Court. Found directly, and as soon discovered that scent was no better than on the previous days of this week. Harried foxes round and round the big woods till daylight failed, and left as many as we found. So ends a scentless week of east wind, somewhat unusual at this time of the year, but the glass is falling a little, and better things may come.

**November 23rd.—**

Hounds met at Barwick House, the present residence of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Kenelm Digby. After running through the cover close to the house, hounds were trotted off to Clifton Wood, but though a few appeared to feather on a line, there was no definite find till we got to Ridgestall, whence we ran hard to Thornford Firs, then back to Ridgestall, where he dwelt

a bit, but, not feeling quite as comfortable there as usual, he again left his home, leading at first, as before, towards Thornford and nearly to Clifton Wood; but we had a check by the railway, and did not hit the line off very quickly, so that he was probably well a-head of us when we crossed the river by Bradford Mill. We made an unsatisfactory line on by Potters Lease, heading for Nether Compton, but to no purpose, and gave up at the end of about two hours.

**November 24th.—**

Found us some way from home, at Pennard House, and also found a fox waiting for us at Cockmill, who, having shown us that he was there, immediately retired underground. A few more covers, including Ditchat Gorse, were drawn, and also Hornblotton, without success. A brace, however, were in West Wood, and we ran one of them right merrily to South Wood, whence he swung out right-handed, and we ran him through Lattisham and Parbrook to Bradley, and lost at West Pennard, and then home.

**November 25th.—**

The fog was so thick that we doubted whether the Master would throw off or not; he determined, however, to do so, and, the fog lifting a little as we moved from Stourton Inn to Norwood, enabled us to see that cover drawn blank, and Bagmore also. Back in Stourton Wood two were at home, and the fog as well, so the hounds were soon whipped off, and heavy was the rain that accompanied us home.

**November 26th.—**

Nor was the weather much more inviting when a small field met at Five Bridges. This select few, however, were cheered by a pretty hunting run from Nyland over the Cale River to Temple Lane, thence to Kington Magna, and, bearing left, nearly to the Temple Lane Bridge over the South Western Railway, along the side of the road nearly to Buckhorn Weston, and, turning left again, to Rodgrove, in which cover, after a deal of patient hunting, our fox was killed at the end of about an hour and a quarter.

Another fox was chopped in the same cover, and the hounds having thus been rewarded, and every one being wet through, the word was given and home we trotted. The wind was variable and uncertain, but there was no doubt about the rain.

**November 27th.—**

A rather finer, though grim looking, morning found us at Stockbridge Oak. A large field were out. Stockbridge Covers and Six Acres were tenantless, but the hounds soon spoke to their fox in Long Plantation, whence they took him out with a good head; he very soon succumbed, and was killed in a ditch close by. After drawing Bailey Ridge we went down to Whitfield, and just then it was that a sad accident happened to the Rev. M. Woodman, of Glanvilles Wootton. He was galloping past some horses when one of them, ridden by a second horseman, struck out at him, and unluckily caught his leg, fracturing it badly below the knee. Every one lamented it most sincerely, but it was not till Saturday that it was

generally known, when it called forth much regret and sympathy in the field. Meantime hounds found a fox in Whitfield, who ran away hard by Knighton Gorse to Beerhacket Hill, and along it to Thornford Firs, and eventually into Honeycombe. There he hung some time, and at last came out on the Leweston side and ran over the big field under Green Lane, and went to ground in a friendly drain. We followed him slowly, but marking him to ground there at last, he was dug, bolted by a very small terrier, and shortly eaten. The afternoon was late, so no more was done ; but we were sorry to hear some gentleman had the misfortune to kill his horse near Whitfield Brook.

**November 28th.—**

We met at Tripp's Limekiln, where a small field were assembled ; and we pitied the keepers, who had been out all the stormy night before earth stopping. We found at once in Tripp's Gorse, and had a fair forty minutes between it and the Holts, killing him close to Ashcombe. Another from the Holts gave us a second

twisting run, finding himself at last in Lanes, where was a large family of his first cousins, who fled in all directions, hounds sticking to the hunted one, whom they finally forced out, and the river being in flood he retired to a rabbit earth on its shores, where the hounds themselves unearched him and another besides, a third being allowed to make good his escape to the cover.

**November 30th.—**

The hounds met at Over Compton House, and found their first fox in Nether Compton, running him towards Combe Farm, but, from lack of scent, he was soon lost. Indeed, there was no sport to-day, for, though another was found in Potter's Lease, the line he took was all over the ploughs, and, after some slow, persevering hunting, he, too, was left alone.

**December 1st.—**

We had better sport. The meet was at the Kennels, and we went straight to the Templecombe Woods, where we found and lost. Then we went to the Hull Gully Plantation, whence

a good fox broke on the western end and raced for Charlton Gorse, where his pursuers were squandered right and left in their haste to get down the hill ; the hounds meantime bore left, heading for Milborne Port Station, thence, swinging up right, they went straight through Ridge Plantation and the Slates, and then ran the road up to the edge of Bristol's Gorse, and to ground in Sigwells, in forty minutes. We then went to Cheriton Wood and found another good fox. He took us, at a smart pace, through Charlton Wood and out by the gully, and thence straight to the North Combe Wood, through the big wood, and out, and into Mr. Dodington's park, where, after hunting through it, the shrubberies, flower beds, and outhouses, we reluctantly left him. Thus we had two pretty gallops of about 40 minutes each, and nobody, not even the foxes, the worse for the day's sport. A clear frosty evening, and certainly a good scent in the morning.

**December 2nd.**—

Those who went to-day to Redlynch Gate

were rewarded, for a fine fox was found in Brewham Wood, who, after a turn or two round the Cover, took the open, and raced down to Heaven Farm, near which he went to ground in fifteen minutes. He was soon bolted, and they ran him very hard through Cogley Wood, and out of it, till he saved his brush by getting to ground under the roots of a large fallen tree in a gully, at the end of fifty minutes more. A fine day and a good scent, though there was no trace of the frost foretold by last night's clear sky.

**December 3rd.—**

We met at Bagber Bridge, and had another pleasant day. We were taken at once to Thornhill, where General Parke had, as usual, a good fox for his friends; for, though he does not hunt much himself, he is one of the unselfish few who love to show sport to their neighbours; and nobody was better pleased than he was when the little Red Rover was viewed away from the wood—indeed, two were off together. We went up over the Avenue Field



and pretty fast to the Common Plantation, which was soon alive with the music of hounds as they ran him merrily round and round ; he was not the only one there, either. They forced him out on the Stalbridge side, and ran a short ring towards that town, and back to the cover, which he presently left on the Bagber side, and down to the railway and back once more to cover, out over the Marnhull Road, and to ground in a bank ; when hounds soon dislodged and ate him. Our next came out of Jericho, and ran through Thornhill Wood fast towards Bagber Bridge, over some of our good old-fashioned Dorsetshire doubles, but was unluckily headed, and turned short back in front of hounds, who raced him in full view almost to Thornhill Wood again. This he hurried through, and ran to the 'Three Boars' Heads ; turning short back and bearing a little for Warrbridge, he crossed the river, and hounds pulled him down on a gorse slope on the other side. This was a short, twisting, but fast and enjoyable gallop, of about half-an-hour's duration, and then we went contentedly home.

**December 4th.—**

The meet was at the Green Man, at Pulham. We found in Ranksborough Gorse, and ran to Humber Wood, fast, then to Short Wood and out more slowly for Mappowder and towards Bulbarrow. Back more slowly still to Short Wood again, where a fresh fox jumped up to assist his relative, and took hounds a ring round the Cover, but did not sacrifice himself on the altar of friendship any further. We found another in Humber Wood, and he took us a slow turn by Mappowder and Short Wood also, and near Brockhampton, where he left us. Not much scent to-day, except at first, when we were running up wind, and it was stormy, too.

**December 5th.—**

A small field met the Master at Hunter's Lodge, and did not have a good day, for all the Charlton Musgrove country was drawn blank, except a short line, and to ground instantly, on Mr. Miller's farm. Equally in Stoke Trister, Frith, and Cucklington there were no foxes above ground, whatever there may have been

below. A thick drizzle did not make it more cheerful as we wended our way home moralising on the uncertainty of sport.

**December 7th.—**

My account of this week's sport must necessarily be short, partaking more of quality than quantity, as hounds were only out for two days, and then King Frost laid the grip of his iron hand on Mother Earth and sent us sliding home. But to-day it was all quality. We met at Hazelgrove, and had ran through the Spiinnies hard by, and were just going into Yarcombe, when a "holloa" was heard, and we saw a fox stealing down a hedgerow; hounds were clapped on instantly, and never was a starter's flag lowered to a more distinct race than the run that ensued. Down wind as hard as we could go, the Master's good grey, White Oats, piloting us as long as we could keep him in view, straight for Annis Hills, where he disdained to dwell, but, leaving it on his left, he bore on fast, over several fields to Poddimore, past the village, and on to the left of the high road, up to

Poddimore bushes, of which he touched the edge only ; and away again went our gallant fox on his former line, heading for Ilchester, and here, in the parson's garden at Northover, we had our first check at the end of thirty minutes. A black dog had interfered and coursed him, which threw our good hounds out, but they soon regained the line, and hunted him, more slowly, towards Kingsdon, where, picking the line up out of a road, they got on better terms with him again, and ran hard up to a farm house in Long Sutton ; and here we lost him, for, in spite of patient casts, and a shepherd who had seen him, we never recovered him, and a scattered field reassembled to narrate their many adventures by flood and field—some without hats, some without horses, some wet through from too close contact with a certain wide brook that had soused the huntsman, and a few more ; but all delighted and pleased, and all, especially the horses, quite satisfied. An hour and nine minutes, over a really fine flying country, with hardly two bits of plough in the length and breadth of it, was something

to remember ; and the scent we had had could only, as events proved, come before a frost.

**December 8th.—**

It froze sharply, and I have seldom seen the ground so hard after one night's frost. However, after a little delay at the meet, Jack White's Gibbet, hounds were thrown into Yarlington, and walked after a fox up and down some slippery hills, which made a good many of us feel grateful to him for going slowly and leaving no scent behind him. Eventually he, or his brother, was found in a drain, dislodged by a terrier, and eaten. We found several in Elscombe, and ran one slowly towards Lattiford, Holbrook, and Yarlington, and lost, and then went home, watching a most frosty-looking sunset in a frosty looking sky ; indeed, the rest of the week may be briefly chronicled as follows :—

**December 9th.—**

Frost. Hounds, I believe, went to the meet at Creech Hill ; but that can only have been from a sense of honour.

**December 10th.—**

Frostier.

**December 11th.—**

Frostiest.

**December 12th.—**

A cold thaw began ; very reluctantly.

**December 14th.—**

The frost being gone, these hounds were out again to-day, the meet being at Mr. Connop's, at Fifehead Neville; the only question was whether or not there was any "bone" left in the ground—a doubt which made the first fence or two rather an uncomfortable process ; but the landing was much as usual, and our hearts soon became harder than the ground, as fence after fence had to be negotiated at a slow pace, and with no excitement, for, though we found immediately in Cockrow, we could only follow him very slowly towards Deadmore, and back through Hazelbury village to Deadmore again, and on, on a very faint line, through Badbury to Puxey

Copse, and down Puxey Lane to Haydon and up into Badbury again. Here something happened, probably a change of fox, for scent improved, and we ran sharply down to Haydon and on, pointing for Stock, swinging left, to and through Rooksmoor, straight on to King's Stag Withybed. Turned left there, and on by Pulham Mill to Deadmore, where we lost him. The last part was fifty-five minutes, the slow prelude occupying over an hour and a-half.

**December 15th.—**

We met at Marston Magna. It was a day when there was absolutely no scent, and the over eagerness of a large field entirely precluded any chance of sport. From Chilton Cantelo we ran with a most touchy scent towards Queen Camel and lost ; but getting on the line of another they ran him towards Speckington, but in vain. We were then taken to Marston, where a fox was soon on foot, and went away for Corton Gorse, where, after a little delay, he broke on the Cadbury side, and took us up Littleton Hill and back again to Corton

Gorse, and past Marston Cover and to the Railway; here he was heard of, some time ahead, so it being latish the Master whipped off and went home. A very fine sunny day, turning cold in the evening, but there was not scent enough to warrant any expectation of frost.

**December 16th.—**

The few who found themselves at Stourton Inn had a very nice day. A fox was found in Dropping Gutter, from which he raced by the Convent and over a short bit of open to Brewham Wood, and thence as straight as a die over a fine country for Hick's Park, in twenty-five minutes; he took a turn in the lower end of this large cover, and looked out once before he was sure that he got his breath for another start, which, however, he presently made, and in about forty minutes more we killed and eat him in Beaulieu Wood. We then came back to Stavordale; found there, and after a ring round Blacksloughs he made for the open, and took a pretty line out heading for Moor Wood, but gradually worked round back to the woods,



came into Cockrow, rose the hill, and went on over the open towards the Convent, where he doubled back and made for Stavordale; here, evening coming on, hounds were stopped after a hunting run of nearly two hours and a-half. The scent had been very good in the morning, but rather failed in the afternoon.

**December 17th—**

There was a large muster at Chetnole, in spite of its being a foggy morning. We began by running one from Calfhayes to Fuzzy Field and into a fog, whence most of the hounds were extricated, and taken through a few other covers, and eventually to Sweet Hills, where they found, and ran him to Admiral Digby's Plantation very fast; through it, and after one turn he broke for Holnest, heading for Six Acres, and at Long Plantation he turned to his right, and into Long Burton Gorse; then to and through Butterwick, King's Plantation, and Buckshaw Brake, where we had a check at the end of forty-three delightful minutes. He was, however, viewed, and hounds were soon on his

line again, running him down towards the river, then back to the cover; from it to Marsh Copse, on over Port Down Hill to Ryall Gorse, past Holwell Church to Bulhams, thence leaving Sovell's Pit on the left, and Rodmore on his right, he bore on to Hyde's Withybed, Sixmead, and Brickhills into Stockwood, back over the Park through Brickhills again, and away for Lydlinch; and here hounds were, with great difficulty, stopped, as they were then running really hard, but the decline of a winter's day left no alternative, and they had been running for two and a-half hours, more or less.

**December 18th.—**

At Haydon Lodge there was not so much to tell of, for though there were foxes about they declined to afford any sport. One wandered away from the old ruins in the Park to White Post Gate, and we wandered after him for some way. The rest of the day we spent in the Park, Snaggs Harbour, and so on, finally getting as far as Hanover, and from there to our various homes.

**December 19th.—**

Found a small field at Tripp's Limekiln, and we were sorry to see the First Whip not yet out, he having been in bed with a violent chill since Thursday. We found in Plumley, but were too far behind our fox, and ran slowly by Goathill to Ven, some hounds crossing the water very prettily by running up a sloping willow tree and jumping from it to the opposite shore; however, this fox we finally lost in Crackmore. Drew Combe Hill blank, and trotted back to Biddlescombe, where we chopped a fox; then ran another very hard by Stourton Caundle up to Bishop's Caundle Brake, there turned left and raced away back to Newlease, and here hounds divided, and deluded some who were left behind—for hounds had slipped away, and no mistake—into a wild hope that the hounds that came back to Biddlescombe were right. It was not so, however, and on went the leading hounds past Haddon Lodge, and a little to the right to a small cover under Frith, in thirty minutes. Here was a check, but they took a line out, and on more slowly through Plumley to Woodhouse,

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Tripps, and Ashcombe, and towards the Holts, where a confusion of fresh foxes eventually caused the pack to lose their well-merited prey, for it was a fresh one they now took out, and worked him from Rowditches to Marsh Copse, where the Master stopped them, and took them back to Rowditches to look for the hunted fox, but he did not mean to be made a supper of this Saturday night, and, after another effort to supply a substitute, he declined any further share in the proceedings; and so ended a good week's sport.

The terrible accident which the Earl of Guilford met with last week, and which resulted in his death on the subsequent day, Saturday, the 19th, cast a gloom over this neighbourhood; and to show every possible respect and sympathy with Lady Guilford, Mr. Guest did not allow his hounds to go out till after the funeral, which took place on Thursday, Christmas Eve.

**December 26th.—**

These hounds met, as originally fixed, at Compton Castle, where a large field, on horse

and foot, had assembled. Hounds soon found their fox in Round Hills, for that good preserver, Mr. Rome, is sure to have one handy. He broke on the top of the hill, the pack making glorious music as they burst out of cover in full cry after him, and raced him merrily towards the little Quarry Copse, over the Blackford Road, through the copse, and on to Tennants' Wood, to Cheriton, through that, and had no check till we came to a little orchard near Gale's Plantation. After a turn round this they recovered the line, taking it out almost where he had gone in, and down the hill for Maperton Cover, where the earths are ; out again, pointing for his home, and through the same Quarry Copse again and to Tennants' Wood. Here a fresh fox went out, but the Master (who was carrying the horn) held them back to the line of the hunted one, and at last pushed him out towards Charlton Wood and along that gully, and, after running short for a minute or two, he went to ground near Hull Gully, whence the joint efforts of the terrier and the Second Whip dislodged him, and the

hounds enjoyed the worry with the appetite afforded by a two hours' run.

**December 28th.—**

Hounds, horses, and foxes have been busy this week. Monday found them all at Holnest Pound, and our first fox took us away from King's Plantation with a bad scent to Butterwick, and, after a turn there, on to Longburton Gorse and Six Acres. He then ran a sharp ring by Long Plantation to Longburton Gorse, and slowly on to Six Acres again. Not making much of this, they went next to Withy Tree Copse, doing nothing there; but soon recovered the line of the hunted fox, and came up to him in Broke, where he had sought shelter in a rabbit earth—such a soft sandy one, though, that the hounds dug him out themselves and enjoyed him. Green Lane was next drawn, and the small plantations at Leweston, and we found in the larger Stockbridge Cover. Hounds fairly raced him past Six Acres and Long Plantation, and, heading for the hills, left Whitehouse Gorse on their right, just touched Admiral Digby's

Plantation ; on, fast, to Bide's Gorse, where he made a sharp turn and ran back to Sweet Hills, beyond which we had a short check, but, recovering the line, they hunted him well to the Home Covers at Holnest, but were never on good terms with him afterwards, and so the fox had the best of it.

**December 29th.—**

General Parke opened his hospitable doors, and welcomed all to Thornhill. After partaking of an excellent breakfast we found our fox, who was waiting for us in Hargrove. He ran sharply away for the river, which some forded, while others availed themselves of Bagber Bridge, and away for the left hand side of Bagber Gorse, parallel to that swampy green lane to Newton Bridge, and here he bore slightly right again, and up past Puxey Copse and to Badbury, touching Deadmore ; and up that fine grass country over the hill for Cockrow ; here, at the end of fifty-three good minutes, we had a check, which gave the fox an opportunity of leaving us, of which he was not slow to take advantage.

Another was soon found in Deadmore, whom we followed slowly up the hill, and back again to Rooksmore, and he worked slowly about there some time till we went on through Charity Gorse to Hyde's Withybed, and on to, and about Stock, where the shade of eve closed round us, and we did no more.

**December 30th.—**

Was a very distant meet—Kingweston—and hounds were taken there by train. The frost was so sharp that the Master was in no hurry to throw off, and it was past twelve before he found in Mr. Dickinson's large wood; but there was not much scent, and, after a fairly long woodland ring with one turn in the open, he took his hounds on to Sir A. Hood's cover at Butleigh, where, scent improving, they ran very nicely over the hilly grounds and back into the big woods; running the length of them towards the Somerton end for full forty minutes. Here they lost him, and I believe had to do all they knew to catch their train back from Glastonbury.



**December 31st.—**

A late return home last night had its compensation for the Hunt servants in a late start this morning; and they had no distance to get to the meet, which was fixed for the Kennels. There was a good field out, and it was evident that sport was before us, as we were fated to jump a stone wall to get to our first draw—the gorsy hillside which almost forms part of the Wheatsheaf. Hounds got away on good terms with their fox up the hill for the Slates, which we left on our left, and Ridge on our right, across the Charlton Horethorne Road, and over the valley, where the brooks spread traps for the unwary, on, into, and through Charlton Wood, heading for Maperton, and checked in the first road, at the end of an excellent twenty-five minutes' gallop. Haynes tried in vain to recover the line, and eventually marked him to ground in a deep gully hole in Charlton Wood. This run was the feature of the day, though we subsequently killed two foxes in Everlanes, but they had no history attached to them; indeed, one had only a mangy

brush. Another was found in East Hill, and we raced him the length of Hanover, and then followed a weak line to Deadman's Copse, but with a fresh and inefficient fox ; so went home.

**January 1st, 1886.—**

New Year's Day was the Cross Keys, at Lydford, and we began the New Year with a fairly good scent. Found in Park Wood, and ran nicely to and through Hornblotton Wood, and then over the gully and away for Gazebo and Ditchat Gorse ; had a slight check at the end of twenty-six minutes, but hounds recovered the line themselves, and we went on well to Evercreech town end, and lost him entirely there, after a pretty run of about forty minutes ; and beyond drawing Milton Cleveland blank we did no more. Fine still weather and a little rain the afternoon. Few thought, as we had our gallop over the flying country to-day, that the church bell was tolling at Charlton Horethorne for the funeral of one of the best sportsmen who ever rode across the Blackmore Vale, for perhaps but few were aware that old John Press was laid

to his rest in the green churchyard there at three o'clock in the afternoon. Very nearly ten years ago John Press wound his horn for the last time in the country in which he had shown such wonderful sport for twelve years under Mr. Digby and Sir Richard Glyn. Ill-health overtook him, and for the last two or three years his mind failed completely; but never will Dorsetshire sportsmen forget the words of the song our present Master has often sung to us—

“ We've followed John Press through fair and through  
foul

When we've wanted a fox in the morning.”

**January 2nd.—**

Hounds met at Redlynch Gate, and the fog being thick on the hill, the Master went at once to Moor Wood, where they found, and had a good run by Stoney Stoke, through Redlynch Park alongside the stream, out, and in again, and to some farm buildings at Godmanstone, where we eventually lost him. Found our next in Leeks Hill, and hounds ran well—indeed, really hard—to Waddon Down, on to Holbrook,

thence to Elscombe, and out, pointing to Jack White's Gibbet, where they swung right for Waddon Down and Holbrook again, and out thence for Lattiford; took a turn there, and then ran to Verrington, and on, heading for Leeks Hill, but the scent was just not good enough, and we had to give him up, though he had lead us a dance of about two hours.

**January 4th.—**

Found these hounds, and a fair field to meet them, at Cadbury House—Mr. Bennett's. A fox was quickly on foot in his Home Covers, and we ran him hard towards Woolston and short back again to the village, where we had a check, but soon the hounds recovered the line, and ran to Wearyall, and through that cover and out, heading for South Barrow, but he turned short up hill, remembering a friendly hole in Galhampton Gully; here he took refuge, but, hunting crops being turned into spades, he was not there for long, and hounds eat him for luncheon. For their dinner another was soon provided, being found in the Withybed hard by,

and, after running through Wearyall, was despatched in Chapel Cover. The rest of the day was spent in a sharp chase from Wearyall to Cadbury Castle, where we whipped off. We were very glad to have seen to-day a show of foxes that promised sport for the future.

**January 5th.—**

We went to Buckhorn Weston, which seemed a rallying point, so many members of the East Dorset and South Wilts Hunts being present, besides our own field. We trotted off to Sandley, where we found directly, and fox and hounds went away as if they meant it, straight for Thorngrove; before getting there, however, Mr. George Gordon met with a heavy fall, but happily broke no bones. From Thorngrove he bent a little right-handed, and we crossed the S.W. Railway, and then the Stour by a useful bridge near Eccliffe Mill, the fox in view; thence he went on straight away for Hunger Hill, and across the Gillingham Road on to Highgrove, hounds carrying the line beautifully, though not as fast as at first; on over the

Shaftesbury Road, and into Doncliffe, in thirty-seven minutes. They never left him, but worked him right through this great cover, down to a farmhouse close to the College Arms in Stour Row, where he slipped away from hounds in the buildings, and was seen stealing back into the Cover; they were on the line again in no time, and, running the length of Doncliffe and down the north side, he went to ground in a watercourse at the end of something over an hour from the find. Alas! we were in our neighbour's country, so, though all was done that could be by hounds and hedgestakes, we had to leave him there! Back to Nyland, where were plenty of foxes, but the scent had altered, and, in spite of various false starts, we got no run, and finally we marked one to ground in the Thorn Cover, and trotted home in furious hail and sleet.

**January 6th.—**

The snow, which was inches thick in London, reminded us of itself here, and a powdering of it all day, more or less, did not

impart a very cheerful feeling to the meet at Middlemarsh, or the hunt that followed, which was entirely in the Grange Woods, and the ins and outs of which I cannot describe. There was not much scent at any time, and it was especially bad in the afternoon.

**January 7th.—**

Things had not improved on Thursday, when hounds put in an appearance on Mr. Dendy's lawn at Lattiford, where the frost was so hard that the ring of the horses' hoofs on the grass did not sound like hunting. Nor were we surprised when at twelve o'clock the Master decided not to attempt it.

**January 8th.—**

There was not much frost that night, nor yet much thaw, so, after sliding to West Hill Gate, it was found possible to hunt. Only a very small field were out, but those few met with many falls, and much sport. Lenthay Moor was drawn blank, but a fox was at home in Honeycombe, who ran to

Leweston Rookery, Lillington Wood, under Leweston Wood, to Stockbridge, on to Six Acres, when he turned left-handed, and went for Holnest, where we had a check in the home Plantations, but soon went out again, and on by Holnest Church to Longburton Gorse, and over the Common to Westhall; thence by Folke to Withytree Copse, and on for Buckshaw; all this at a fair holding pace, and much varied by loose horses slipping about; from Buckshaw we swung left, and into Ferney Down in an hour and forty minutes from the find, having ridden over the cream of the country with our hearts in our mouths, though, indeed, they must have been in the right place after all to go on at all. I am told he was marked to ground near Ferney Down, and left there in the warm.

**January 9th.—**

A severe frost came on, which made it impossible to hunt at Montacute.

**January 11th.—**

The severe frost broke up, and the grass



was again in a fairly rideable condition. There was a good deal of bone in the ground, however, so it was quite twelve o'clock before hounds were thrown into Pullham Gorse, which they made musical with their melody for some little time, finally killing a fox in the corner of Holwell Gorse. After this Holwell Plantations were drawn blank, but we soon got on the drag of a fox in a thick gorse field by Pulham Lake, and at the lower end hounds ran into and killed him. From here we trotted back to Ranksborough Gorse, found, and ran out towards Pulham Gorse, but he quickly re-crossed the road, and went fast and straight over a pretty line for Mappowder, in thirteen minutes; here he made a sharp turn to the right; hounds came to a check, and never got on good terms with him again, though they marked a cold line back towards Shortwood, where we left him, no doubt.

**January 12th.—**

We awoke to a sharp frost; and, seeing

how hard the ground was underneath yesterday, it did not want much of a frost to make it equally hard above; the two together making hunting impossible; and though hounds went to Mudford Bridge they could not throw of.

**January 13th.—**

Introduced a change of scene; no frost, but a cutting wind, and cold storms of sleet and rain from the north-west. They swept rather bitterly over the top of Creech Hill when we got there, and we were glad to go a little lower down to Lord Ilchester's Gorse; whence a fox took us up again, over it, around it, and over it again, finally dropping down the hill, and away pretty fast; down wind, over Lamyatt's Beacon, to the Coombe River, and on to Waddon House, which we soon left behind us, as we galloped on to Henley Wood, and by Sheep House Farm into Cogley. There were plenty of foxes here, and they took us a considerable turn round the wood, where our fox finally went to ground. We found another in Pink Wood and ran round it, inside and out, but a heavy squall of snow

coming down, the scent failed, and the Master, who carried the horn, took hounds home.

**January 14th.—**

The meet was the popular one of Henstridge Ash, and a good field, as usual, were assembled there by eleven o'clock. We went to Prior's Down, and found a cat, a few rabbits, and presently a "gone away" on the Stalbridge side announced a "better beast of chase." Full of ride was everybody, and we went merrily over the lovely Vale, but, unluckily, for a few fields only, for we came to a sudden check at the railway; and after some delay we went to a field near to the line close under Stalbridge Station, and there he had gone to ground; one hound, Pitiless, followed him in, and he bolted into the middle of the pack, who made short work of him. Our next draw was Stalbridge Park Wood, but, though hounds ran him well up to the Park wall, we there mysteriously lost him. We then went to the Gorses by Bowden Lane, and found at once, running backwards and forwards between Spurles and Bowden for some

little time, till the fox jumped into a small pond in the middle of the pack, who nearly got him then and there, but he gave us another three minutes as hard as he could go; he could not save his brush, however, hounds killing him in a tuft of gorse, at the edge of the ditch, on Bowden Hill side; so we finished with blood, and went home in a cold frosty evening. Mr. J. Daniel got a fall, but, happily, did not sustain serious injury. Mr. Harold Paget was out, just returned from the Soudan.

**January 15th.—**

Found us at the White Post Gate, near Poyntington, and, the frost having come to nothing, hounds were taken to draw Rimpton, which, with Marston Park, Trent Gully, Trent Barrow, Charlock Hill, and Holdway Gorses, all proved blank. After this long draw it was cheering to hear a whimper in the Wheatsheaf, which soon broke into a chorus as hounds burst out of the Gorse, and ran hard over the ploughs by Ugly House and to Charlton Horethorne, in thirteen minutes; here ensued a short check,

but they soon carried the line on, under Charlton Gorse, and, bending a little to the right, over Hangman's Lane for Stowell Plantation, and then they bore right again to the Slates, near which we lost, after about an hour's run. We returned to the Wheatsheaf and found another, who went for Compton Castle, but a pelt of rain came down which spoilt the scent, and, hounds coming to a check, the word was given for home.

**January 16th.—**

Tripp's Lime-kiln was the meet for to-day. We found instantly in Woodhouse, and the fox went to Plumley, but thereby deceived us, for, on touching the cover, he at once turned sharp back down the hill to Purse Caundle, and we all had to gallop our very best, and only overtook them in Hanover, which they ran straight through into Goathill, took a complete turn round it and out again by the Lodge. Here—in Goathill—the hounds divided, two or three couple going on to North Wootton Copse, thereby beguiling some of the field to follow

them astray. The rest went on, making the woods ring with lovely music, fast and steadily through the length of Hanover again, over the Sherborne Road, up East Hill, along the whole length of it, and of Everlanes, to the Milborne Port Station, where we turned to the right, to the Laycock Hill, and under the railway arch, heading for the kennels; over that pretty line below Charlton Gorse, keeping above the village, and on to Tennants' Wood, where we had a check. It was about an hour up to this point, and here, or just before, several joined us who had been led astray in Sherborne Park. Here, too, jumping began, and we had plenty of it for the next two hours. From Tennants' Wood the line was soon recovered, first going towards Maperton, but our fox evidently knew nothing of those earths, as he turned right for Gale's Plantation, and on thence for the Red Lion, Cheriton, and here, below the village we had a long and serious check, at the end of an hour and twenty minutes. A wide cast towards the withybed proved successful, for up he jumped in a hedgerow, not far from the

railway, and gave us another gallop in a ring rather, towards Makin Hill and back, running him part of the way in view, and finally into Mr. Field's orchard, where they almost had him, and in a few minutes more he was marked to ground in a hedgerow on Mr. Field's farm; and after a short time, well spent in digging, hounds were rewarded with their well-merited fox; for from the find to the moment of going to ground they had been running for two hours and fifty minutes, and it was a treat to see them hunt. It was a most enjoyable and interesting day, and there was a better scent than we have seen lately, though there was a powdering of snow in the morning, which remained in shady places all day on the ground.

**January 18th.—**

This morning found us in front of Mr. Bailward's house at Horsington, whence we presently proceeded to draw Makin Hill and Ash Tree Copse. We found in the latter, and ran him, with a weak uncertain scent, through

Grove Withybed towards Lattiford House, and picked him up in the orchard of a neighbouring farm. Drawing a few hedgerows, and picking up a weak line for a few minutes, we got back to Cheriton Wood, whence a better disposed fox led us a sharp gallop through Charlton Wood, down the steep field to the left of Tennants' Wood, over the road, and over the ploughs heading for Compton Castle, and into the cover by the Castle in twenty minutes. Here scent changed—perhaps the fox also—for we ran back by Charlton Gorse again, over the hill to Charlton Wood and Maperton Gorse, where, after much patient hunting, they had to give it up. So we were taken away to Templecombe Woods. From here we ran fast, over the railway, leaving Westwood on our left, to and along Everlanes, Spurles, and Toomer Hill, back to East Hill, out below it, and round Gospel Ash. By this time the moon was up, daylight going, and frost coming, so we left off, with a decidedly doubtful feeling as to when we should meet again.



**January 28th.—**

After some days of frost a complete thaw set in, accompanied by such a fog that we wondered whether our eight days of compulsory repose were going to be prolonged to a ninth ; but after a little delay at the door of Fifehead House the mist lifted, and the sun broke through overhead, and hounds moved on in the direction of West Stour, followed by a considerable field. Some hedgerows on Church Farm were drawn, and before long a welcome “holloa” from Ned pronounced that this farmer’s friend had “gone away.” Fast, too, at first ; along the fields by Bogley, on to Sandley, and down to the railway, where a train whistled by not a yard in front of hounds, but happily the fox had made a sudden short turn to the right, which saved the pack from death and destruction. However, they crossed behind the vanishing train, and went on for Langham. Then to Quarr, and bearing right as if for Bailey Withybed, but not touching it, we sunk the Vale and galloped on, over a now rougher country, under Cucklington Wood, and on, over the hill to Bourton village

in forty-five minutes. Here he was viewed, and we thought we should have him, but a check occurred, and he was headed, and, to make a long story short, lost. We found another in Cucklington Wood just as we thought it was drawn blank, for the cover is very thick, and takes close and careful drawing. We ran sharply across the open to Pen Forest, and thence hunted a short running line between it and Charlton Musgrove and Blackslough, finally running him to ground in a cellar of an unused house called Forest Lodge, whence he was dug and eaten. A good day's sport, with some pretty and patient hunting.

**January 29th.—**

We met at Totnel Corner. Drew all Chetnole and the surrounding covers without a whimper, but in Common Plantation we found our first fox, and ran with a bad scent to the hills, and along them to Remedy, and down to the Grange Woods, where the Master had hounds stopped, having heard that the Cattistock had just run into them. We then found in Bide's

Gorse and ran to the hills, and down again to Paper Hill Copse, and out on the side of the hills, but, luckily, turned back to Bide's, and on, leaving Castles on the left; and though we were close to him in a farm building he made good his escape and again got into the recesses of Bide's Gorse, where the extreme want of scent compelled us to leave him.

**January 30th.—**

Found a small field assembled in a thick rain at Tripp's Limekiln. We found almost directly in Tripp's Gorse, and ran slowly towards Windmill Hill, and on into Snagg's Harbour, North Wootton Copse, and back to Snagg's; and after walking after him with very little scent for about an hour, hounds triumphantly marked him to ground in a trip under a gateway at Alwston. A spade and a terrier soon dislodged him, and cold and damp had been his lodging. We then found one in Ashcombe; ran to Tripp's, on into the Holts, out towards Laues, and, like his predecessor, he, too, went to ground in a trip, and shared his fate. Our next

draw was Rowditches, about which, and the other covers, we ran for a bit, then forced him out and hunted him merrily to Ferney Brick-kiln and round by Ashcombe, and into the Holts again, through his native Rowditches, on for Caundle Brake, heading for Holwell Church, where, after much patient work on the part of the hounds, he had to be given up. A soaking morning changed after a while to a finer afternoon, but the glass was falling all day.

**February 1st.—**

Found these hounds at Jack White's Gibbet. At Hadspen, our first draw, we found at once; ran him to the Punchbowl, back towards Galhampton, and killed just before sinking the hill for Maryland. Another from Hadspen managed matters better for himself, for, after a turn round the covers, he outwitted us. At Yarlington we found, but, for want of scent, could make nothing of it, and in Elscombe a few hounds chopped their fox, while the rest of the pack ran to Yarlington and over Clapton Earths, but, failing to make

anything of it, they were glad to share their comrades' supper.

**February 2nd.—**

At the Cross Keys, at Lydford, a large field were assembled; but the day was disappointing owing to all the Lydford Covers being drawn blank, and most of those at Alford also. So the morning was tedious, and it was not till past two o'clock that "gone away" was heard, and a fox broke from the cover in front of Mr. Thring's house, and took us a fairish gallop of eleven minutes to the railway, where a check occurred, and we presently marked him to ground in a big earth, whence we tried in vain to bolt him. Another was found in Sparkford Wood, and we ran sharply by Hazelgrove Park to the Spinnies in thirteen minutes; here a short check ensued, but we recovered the line in the Park, and ran on by a small cover and back to Hazelgrove Rectory and Sparkford Wood, and lost him below the hill this side of Wearyall; and so home.

**February 3rd.—**

A fine morning found us at Middlemarsh to meet the Master and his pack. Mr. Woodman was out in his dogcart, glad to see hounds again after being shut up so long in consequence of his painful accident at the end of November. We found very soon, and ran through the Grange Woods, and very hard over High Stoy, and then for Broad Aloes and back to Batcombe Wood, and to ground in fifty minutes. Being in the Cattistock country we had to leave our fox alone, though they could almost see him in the earth. Berkeley Gorses, King's Plantation, and Butterwick were drawn blank, but Longburton Gorse was equal to the occasion, and produced a brace, one of which we ran to Six Acres and through Stockbridge, leading for Leweston, but he took a turn and swung back to Longburton Gorse, on through Butterwick to Broke and Withy Tree Copse, and backwards and forwards with vexatiously little scent, though they picked up the line every now and then so merrily we thought they were killing him. But, no; and for three hours and

a half that fox continued to lead hounds a dance in and out of Broke, on to Folke Church, nearly to Ferney Down, back to Folke, again to Ferney Down, and out over the hill as if for Butterwick, turning sharp back and then away for Buckshaw over Buckshaw Brook—where some whose ardour was not already cooled, cooled it still more—to King's Plantation, and back on a very feeble line to Broke once more, to Longburton Common, and here he was running so short that ten minutes' more daylight must have enabled hounds to account for him; but day was closing, or had closed, and the Master very reluctantly blew his horn, and sent them home. The hounds hunted most perseveringly, and but for the curiously catchy scent, which at times was altogether wanting, they could not fail to have been rewarded with blood.

**February 4th.—**

The favourite meet at Warrbridge did not belie its reputation, for we had an excellent run, which a large field were present to

enjoy ; including some strangers, though the late Master, rarely as we now see him, can hardly come under that heading. We found directly in Hollow Hill on Lydlinch Common, ran away well by Ricketts and over the river for Holtham, took a turn round Sterts, where a "holloa" for Stalbridge Weston misled us, but the pack soon turned into Holtham, hit the line, carried it through Thornhill Cover, over the river and the Sturminster Road, to Lydlinch Withybed, crossed the river again by a ford, and on into Deadmore Common, where they hunted the line beautifully through the gorse, out, over a charming country, and through another brook, at a good holding pace, across the road to Green Man, Pulham, out of it, and on into the New Gorse, where, at the end of an hour and thirty minutes, hounds pulled down the fox they had found in Hollow Hill. The brush was presented to Miss Hood, who had been well carried over all the big fences of this heavy country close to hounds by a very clever pony. From Lodmore, our next draw, a good fox took us to New Gorse,



then to Bullhams, and on for Woodbridge, Rowden Mill, and up to the Holts, where there were more foxes than the one we brought in. Ran about there, and made a ring to Marsh Copse and back to Rowditches ; but the morning run was the feature of the day. Miss Lloyd Jones narrowly escaped a bad accident, being thrown and dragged a short distance, but happily sustained no serious injury. Mr. Geo. Neville was also out, and escorted her home, and subsequently through life.

**February 5th.—**

Of the meet at West Hill Gate there is little to record, for, though there were abundance of foxes, there was no sport whatever, and the day was spent between Sherborne Park, North Wootton Copse, Hanover, and East Hill.

**February 6th.—**

Was not much better. It was bitterly cold and frosty, and it was far from cheering to see all Montacute and Brympton drawn blank, Potter's Lease also. We marked a fox to

ground in Barwick Earths in the afternoon, and came home on roads that were hard and slippery, under a clear sky that threatened a continuation of frost.

**February 8th.—**

Found the frost pretty well gone, though there was still some in the ground—enough, probably, to deter a good many people, as the field was small that met at Mr. Connop's hospitable door, to enjoy his kind greeting and his refreshments. After a little pause here, hounds moved on to Cockroad, where they found. And after the little Red Rover followed some twenty-eight English gentlemen, and some four or five French ones, down to Deadmore, and on to Puxey Copse, where he turned short back, one hound close at him; along under Badbury, to and through Deadmore, up the hill to Hazelbury Village, where we had a check, but, recovering the line, heading for the Vicarage, which we soon passed, ran towards Woolland, bearing for Melcombe Park; it was about forty-five minutes up to this point, and

here he seemed to change his tactics, and, running hard, swung backwards over Melcombe Brook. Rising the hill for Hazelbury Bryan, he ran hard and straight from there to Ponting's Gorse, where he was viewed; hounds forced him out, and he led them on still, dead beat as he was, to Pulham Gorses, where, I expect, he played at puss in the corner with a friend, for it must have been a fresh one that took us on almost to Castle Hill, and, crossing the Glanvilles Wootton Road, sought refuge and found safety in the Holwell Plantations, where we left him, having been galloping and jumping for two hours and five minutes. The Master could not resist having one more look for his first fox back in Pulham Gorses, but in vain, so hounds went home.

**February 9th.—**

In a clear frosty morning the meet was at Mudford Bridge. In spite of a suspicious rattle of hoofs on the grass the Master trotted off at 11.30 to Chilthorne Damer; here hounds found their fox almost directly, and ran rather

nicely over a flying country towards Montacute, crossing the railway, but re-crossing it almost directly, and, bearing a little to the right, ran to ground at Lower Odcombe in twenty-seven minutes. A terrier bolted him at the far end of a long drain, and he gave us a short and rather purposeless run over some sandy ploughs, pointing for Chinnock, where he ran us out of scent. After drawing all Brympton blank, we left off about four o'clock in a very frosty afternoon.

**February 10th.—**

The meet had been fixed for the Kennels, but the frost was too sharp for hunting. I hear hounds were taken out in the afternoon for exercise, and found a fox near Milborne Port; there was, however, no scent, which was as well, as riding was most unsafe.

**February 11th.—**

A good deal of frost remained, though there had been a cold foggy thaw all night. A large field had assembled at Holnest Pound; and the

morning was spent in Middlemarsh Woods, where foxes were plentiful, and afforded much galloping, but all got off scot free. The sun came out, and the going improved about two o'clock, at which time we found a fox in Whitehouse Gorse, running him with little or no scent into Homebushes, thence over Stockbridge and Sixacres, on, touching Longburton Gorse and the Common, and gradually to Broke, and on as if for Ferney Down, which they left on the left, and swung away to Buckshaw Brake, and made a line along the river, but soon lost it, and, in spite of "holloas," and a cast towards the Holts, failed to recover it again.

**February 12th.—**

Found us at Haydon Lodge, where a brace of foxes were found in an unusual cover—namely, an oak tree. Both were run across the Park, and one was soon killed, the other taking refuge in a herd of deer, though a single hound, Radnor, who got his nose bit for his pains, nearly had him once. Went on, on the line of another, through Hanover and East Hill, to

Milborne Station, which, curiously, proved a terminus to two foxes, as both were pulled down and eaten close by. The rest of the day we ran about Crackmore and Goathill, Haydon, Hanover, the Holts, and as far as Marsh Copse and back; but there was nothing particular to say about it. A fine spring-like day, and a contrast to wintry Wednesday.

**February 13th.—**

A small field assembled in a showery, grey, morning, at Tripp's Lime-kiln. The Master's pack was soon at work in Tripp's Gorse, and a "holloa" away at the top led us away and on to the Holts, down to Ashcombe, and then by Haydon Gorse, to Hanover, to Woodhouse, up Plumley, and out on the ploughs at the top. Here he took us across Hayter's Farm, and along the gully, making a ring towards Lanes, and so back to the Holts, and in about an hour and a-quarter they gave him up for lost, and should have killed but for too many "holloas" and too many foxes on foot. Lanes was next drawn. There were several foxes at home, and

we ran one with a very bad scent into Stock, losing him near Warrbridge Gate. Back to draw the Holts and Tripps once more; the field growing small by degrees and beautifully less, till at Purse Caundle Gorse it had dwindled to three, viz., Miss Serrell, Mr. D. Collins, and the writer—the same number of foxes crossing Toomer Hill. Followed one of them to Spurles, Bowden, nearly to Martin's Wood, and back for Bowden; where departing daylight and tired hounds compelled the Master to bow to circumstances and go home.

**February 15th.—**

The hounds met at Five Bridges, and a curious thing happened. They were being taken into the little field by the side of the bridge, where they usually wait, when a fox crossed in front of them and swam the river Cale under their eyes. The Master had only just driven up, and the Whips had to do all they knew to restrain the eager pack till he was on his horse and ready to gallop away with them in pursuit, and very sharply they

ran along the fields parallel to the road, to Bow Bridge Turnpike. Here they swung right over the road and the brook, and into Nyland, in seventeen minutes. By this time the rest of the field came up, some eight or nine only having been mounted in time to enjoy the first run. After a turn or two round the cover we went away on a colder line, across the brook and road, again to Sayell's Farm and back again to Nyland, where he was marked to ground. After another short turn, we went to Fifehead Magdalen, found, ran down by Mr. Sandford's Farm, and to the withybed by the Stour, and round by the front of Fifehead House; all very slowly, and he walked away from us at last.

**February 16th.—**

From Marston Magna we went to Podimore Bushes, and had a very pretty fast gallop from there to Kingsdon in twenty-two minutes, and to ground; dug, but in vain, and retraced our steps. Found in Annis Hills, made a loop



out as if for Podimore, then back to Annis Hills and away, very fast, almost to Speckington ; thence, bearing sharply to the right, he went to Podimore Moor, and bore on as if for Kingsdon, finally going to ground, after a fifty-minutes' run, in a long drain between Kingsdon and Northover. A gallant young hound, Paradox, went into the drain after him, and as it was very long and partly full of water it was not easy to get him out ; but, after some trouble, both hound and fox were extricated, and though the former was much exhausted and bitten he was not seriously injured, and enjoyed a morsel of his enemy as much as his brothers did, before starting for the long trot home.

**February 17th.—**

The same cold grey east wind prevailing, we met hounds at Bishop's Caundle, and drawing Lanes found directly in that excellent little cover. We ran first towards Stourton Caundle, and then up to the Holts, and to Mr. Spicer's house, and lost him there after a

scurry, in which road work predominated, of some twenty minutes. We then went to the Woodbridge Withybed and ran very prettily through the Park at Stock, across the road to Lodmore, by Hyde's Withybed, through Brickles, out by Parson's Copse, and over the Lydlinch Common to Ricketts, and then back to Brickles. After a turn there he ran down to the river and went as if for Rooksmore; but in Puxey Drove he changed his mind and his direction, and bore back for Lydlinch again and to the Rectory there, where we were told he was in a trip, and tried for him; he had not waited for us, however, and virtually this good run of an hour and-a-half ended here; though they ran again through Hollow Hill and Brickles in the hope of recovering him. The scent was very variable.

**February 18th.—**

Found a good field assembled at Pulham, all ready to do and dare, and most had enough before the day was over. We found in Humber Wood and ran well to Short Wood, whence, after

a short check, they went on merrily towards Armswell, bearing right, and then up to, and over Buckland Knoll, to Armswell, bearing thence to Whatcombe, and on over the open by Alton, above Plush to Puddletrenthide, and then leaving it behind us we bore down left-handed, and at Doles Ash they fairly ran into their fox in the open, and killed him in little over an hour from the find—a really good eight mile run into Mr. Radclyffe's country. We then worked back, drawing Mappowder, Notty Wood, and Brockhampton Withybed blank. Our next find was in Ranksborough Gorse, whence hounds got away on good terms with him, and raced him by King's Stag, thence up to Humber, bearing for Short Wood, but, turning right before he got there, they fairly raced to Mr. Warr's Farm on Duntishe Common, where this fast twenty-five minutes' run was over, as a back cast to Short Wood did not recover the line. Most horses, as well as their owners, had had enough by this time, and were well satisfied to go home.

**February 19th.—**

We met at Thornford Village, and we ran first from Ridgestall over the hill to Leweston and Lillington, and back to Leweston, where we lost. Found our next in Whitfield, whence we ran by Knighton Gorse, over Leweston Park, by the Rookery for Longburton, but he made a short turn and saved himself; for, in spite of a weak line which took us in Sherborne Park, we could not get on terms with him again. We then found one in Green Lane, who ran the Park down to near the Castle on an uncertain line; a “holloa” brought us back a little way, and there was our fox high up a tree! Some stones brought him down, and he fell on his head, but, picking himself up, he slipped away from hounds and went as fast as they could race by the home cover and North Wootton Copse, into Snagg’s Harbour; where, after a little dodging, he was run into and killed.

**February 20th.**

Found us at Stalbridge, where a fair field met the Master and his pack, some having come

by road, and some by rail. Harputts, Ten Acres, and the Church Spinney were alike blank, but better luck awaited us in the Common Plantation, whence a fine fox broke away and ran by Thornhill and down to, and back along the river, over Hargrove, towards the Common Plantation again, where a fresh fox jumped up before the hounds, who raced it down the road for Marnhull, turning right over railway and river (the latter by a useful wooden bridge), and, after a turn that way, he swung back for King's Mill, then over the flat towards West Mill, where the nature of the fences changed, and a row of upright stones had to be negotiated occasionally; we then, with our fox in view, crossed the river by a ford, and ran merrily under Marnhull for King's Mill Withybed, where we thought he would wait for us. Not so, however, and on we went towards Thornhill Obelisk, through the wood, to the river, and almost the same wide circle again, thinking every minute we should kill him; and some of the horses rather wished it, too, I fancy. The line now got colder, and the pace slower, and

we almost walked on by Jericho, leaving Holtham on the right, towards Lanes, then on to the cold ploughs near the Holts, where we finally lost all touch of him, after incessant running for over three hours with every variety of fence and any amount of galloping. So ends a really fine week's sport, and I wish I may have as many good runs to chronicle in my next.

**February 22nd.—**

The same calm east wind prevailing made us hope for improved scent, but, having met at Cheriton and found a fox in Grove Withybed, we were surprised to find how indifferent it was, hounds being hardly able to own it when they came out of cover, a field's breadth behind the fox, who made for Makin Hill and towards Horsington; here he bore left, and scent improved, and we had a very pretty hour's gallop over that fine grass country, where the large sound doubles are a positive pleasure to horse and man. First he led us towards Rodgrove, but, not touching it,

he ran hard back towards Cheriton, up to Hatherleigh, and wound round the Red Lion, back to Hatherleigh Farm, and, heading for Wincanton, he crossed the turnpike road and went on up the hill to Holbrook, turned left, and into Elscombe, where he managed to baffle hounds altogether. For once, I counted the fences in this run—thirty-seven in sixty minutes. Our next move was in the direction of some large doubles near Rodgrove, but we did not find till we got to that cover, where a brace were at home. One broke on the west side and ran to the brook by the railway, and, after a slight check, we went on over the Cale, some of the field getting through the river, others crossing by Temple Lane Bridge, and here they bore away for Cheriton Withybed, with a good holding scent, but not enough to press him, for he took a turn back for Horsington, and under the Manor House and through Combe Throop. Our fox then crossed the South Western Railway and ran along the Somerset and Dorset line a little way, crossing it at Common Lane, up to Yenston,

past Martin's Copse, to the Templecombe Woods, and on to Stowell Village, where, an unwelcome cur interfering, we lost him at the end of a very pretty run of an hour and four minutes.

**February 23rd.—**

A large field met at Sparkford Inn. A small cover at Hazelgrove, and Yarcombe, being drawn blank, the order was given for Babcary. A loughish trot took us there, and we were rewarded by a find, for a brace were waiting for us, and we went away, but with moderate scent, towards Charlton Adam, by Cary Fitzpaine, to Podimore Moor, through the Bushes, and on to the edge of the river at Yeovilton, and lost. Whether our fox committed suicide in the river or not I cannot say, but some suspected him of it. We next found at Chilton Cantelo in the laurels near the house, and had a fair forty minutes in that flat flying country in the direction of Annis Hills, and back by Park Farm, Marston, and towards Mudford, finally losing him near the railway at Hummer



Farm. They hunted him well, and at times ran hard, but were not able to kill, and, the day waning, it was now time to go home, and a bitter cold ride back we had.

**February 24th.—**

Was an extremely cold morning, and the meet at Redlynch Gate was not large. A fox was found in Moor Wood, who, after a short turn round the cover, went away into Cogley, and out of that cover pointing for Brewham, but, being headed by a ploughman, he turned left-handed, and went straight to Hick's Park, in twenty-nine minutes. They had got away so sharply that hardly any one was fairly with them, but we got up at this check; from here we had some very good slow hunting over a beautiful country back to Cogley, whence a fresh fox took us a ring out by the Bull at Hardway, but we could not account for him. Redlynch Gorse was our next draw, and from it we ran towards Wincanton and over the railway to Stony Stoke, and to Park Wood, but could do no more good.

**February 25th.**

A cold grey morning found a good field at Warrbridge. The Thornhill foxes were away, or engaged elsewhere, for, after going through the covers, we found our first in Jericho. He led us through Holtham, on to Pile Lane Plantations by Newlease to Plumley, all very slowly and with no excitement save the jumping of a sheep wash at Stourton Caundle, where one scarlet coat embraced the offer of a bath, and here we lost our fox, in spite of all efforts to mark him to ground. We next spent a not unprofitable hour in Stalbridge Park, bringing two foxes to hand, who had retired into a small trip in the wood. There was a third to ground with them, but he declined to be eaten, and took us a rather pretty turn over the Park to Pile Lane, passing Church Copse, and on into Stourton Caundle Village, where we entirely lost him.

**February 26th.**

From West Hill Gate hounds were at once put into Honeycombe. They came out over the

top and ran a good fox over the hill by Lillington Wood, the Rookery, through Leweston, and on to Green Lane in twenty-six minutes. From here we did nothing more with him, though they made a weak line into and all about Sherborne Park. Later on we ran out of the Park, and towards Ven, to Hanover, and Haydon Gorse. Another fox was found in an oak tree in the Park, a kind of "cover" they seem to frequent there, and he gave us a short, but not remarkable, gallop. Drawing Coombe Hill blank terminated the day's proceedings.

**February 27th.—**

A great deal of frost in the ground seemed to make hunting doubtful, but after a little delay the Master threw his pack into Biddlecombe, whence a fox slipped away for Plumley; but he had not run one field before we discovered there was, if possible, less scent than ever, hounds hardly owning the line at all. However, they persevered with it, carrying it right to Clayhanger, and back again through Plumley to Biddlecombe, out on the top for

Newlease, to Pile Lane, calling at Mr. Harris's orchard, where an earth was closed to him, and on, very slowly, at a walk, over some cold ground to a field under Stalbridge Park wall, with some large patches of gorse, out of one of which, presently, up jumped our fox. A hound, Patron, made a dash at him and caught him by the tip of the brush, and they went on together for a stride or two, till a brother hound dashed in to help, and the pack made short work of him. The gorses by Toomer Wall furnished another, who must have been caught napping, as a very short scurry settled his fate. We soon found one in Spurle's Gorse, and ran down the hill, away for Hill's Farm at Bowden, up to Bowden Knoll, back to Spurles, and up the hill once more, when he took to dodging in and out of two or three fences, finally bolting into a rabbit hole; after a very short dig and a word from the terrier he re-appeared, and hounds rushed in and tore him out for themselves. Three foxes having been accounted for, the Master wound his horn for home, though the day was yet young. Some snow fell in the night, which

may make it warmer, as the cold all this week has been severe.

**March 1st.—**

Snow prevented any question of hunting, but on

**March 2nd.—**

Hounds duly arrived at Mudford Bridge, and were soon thrown into Ashington Wood. That cover, however, together with Limington Warren, Stone Farm, and Brimsmore Tree, were all drawn blank. They had not been long in Vagg before a whimper gave us hopes, but they were not realised, for though there was a fox, and though we went away after him, scent was so hopelessly bad we could not make a real run of it, though we followed him nearly to Thorn Coffin; but a wide cast, even towards Odcombe and Montacute, failed to mend matters. Nor did we find again.

**March 4th.—**

We met at Holnest Pound, and it was very

doubtful whether it would be safe to ride. The Master did not arrive till past twelve, and the ground was so hard and slippery that after waiting another half-hour or so he decided to do a little cub hunting and no more. But the cubs having grown into foxes did not see the fun of this, and the one we found in Withy Tree Copse declined to join in our game, and went away in the direction of Buckshaw. Ferney Down and Marsh Copse were blank, and hounds went home by three o'clock. A fresh fall of snow that night, which continued through Friday, kept us all at home both that day and Saturday also, and for nearly a fortnight more.

**March 19th.—**

The frost having at last broken up, the hounds met at Bagber. There was a very small field, as the morning was very wet, and we had a long trot over Cutnill Bridge to Ashley Plantation, at Todber. Two foxes soon broke cover on the Fifehead side, and we followed one rather merrily into Marnhull village. There

a superabundance of "holloas" confused hounds, and probably the fox also, for the latter turned short back past Nash Court and down towards Trill Lane, to the left of Fifehead House, crossing the Stour by the bridge near the Roman Catholic Chapel, up to Moorside, whence he returned to Ashley and to ground. We then drew Spar Copse, Queen's Plantation, and Twin Wood blank, but found a fox in Year-grove, who had evidently been travelling, for he came out of cover close in front of hounds, and could not gain on them, so they ran into and ate him opposite King's Mill, thus ending with blood.

**March 20th.—**

The meet was at Tripp's Lime-kiln, and our first find was in Biddlecombe. We ran him with very little scent through Newlease to Pile Lane, and, after a short ring round, hounds marked him to ground in Mr. Harris's orchard hedge in Stalbridge Weston; half-an-hour of spades and terriers, and he was numbered with the dead. Trotted thence to Crackmore and

Coombe Hill, but did not find till we got to the shrubberies at Ven; and here we believe a fox committed suicide in the stream, as he was seen to jump in surrounded by hounds and never re-appeared. We found another fox in Hanover, who ran up and down the cover, the hounds making lovely music through the hanging wood, and back again; but the fox thought discretion the better part of valour, and sought refuge in a rabbit hole, whence he was soon dislodged, and served for supper for the pack, who then went home.

**March 22nd.—**

The meet was at Pulham, and, having drawn Ponting's Gorse blank, we went on to Rooksmoor, where we soon found. A good fox broke on the far side and went away for the hill above Deadmore, turning down to that common, through it, and along the flat to Lydlinch Brickfields, where, however, he turned sharp back and made the best of his way to Haydon Gorse; crossing Lydlinch Brook to Rooksmoor, and on to Charity Gorse. From



here he led us, more slowly, to Deadmore again, whence a deer went away before the hounds, who took no notice of him, but gave all their attention to a "holloa" which called them back to Rooksmoor, and thence, more slowly still, to Brickles, over Lydlinch Common, for Ricketts; thence to Hollow Hill, and between Hollow Hill and Thornhill he came to hand. The first part of the run was extremely trying to horses and hounds, owing to the warmth of the day, the excessively heavy holding state of the ground, and the pace, which was good for the first thirty minutes. After the hounds had enjoyed their fox we moved on, and, though many first horses had had enough, several stayed on and saw a few more covers drawn blank, and another fox killed in the Stock Home Wood before going home.

**March 23rd.—**

Found a good field assembled at Marston Magna, and a long trot took us to Podimore, where we found nothing, and turned our steps

to Annis Hills, where better luck awaited us. We found at once, and going out as if for Babcary, our fox bore right-handed at the big brook, and went away for Camel Hill and the Obelisk, but here he took a turn the other way, and, leaving Yarcombe on our left, went away merrily over a fine flat country, heading for Babcary Thorns. The hounds hunted beautifully, and though not on very good terms with their fox, they wore him steadily down by Annis Hills again, whence he came out on the Podimore side, and made a short ring round and away again, but for a short distance only, for in ten minutes more they had him to ground under a gateway, whence he was quickly dislodged and eaten. This was a fine hunting run, over a beautiful country, and occupied, from find to finish, about two hours and three-quarters. The day was very warm and trying.

**March 24th.—**

The races being fixed for this afternoon at Charlton Horethorne, the Master had an

early meet with his own pack. They found a brace of foxes at Inwood at eight o'clock, and followed one by Yenston, through Inwood again, and on to Spurles, and whipped off. They next went down to Lady Theodora's Gorse, from that gorse running a fox through Henstridge Station and village, almost to Stalbridge Park wall. Here he turned right by Toomer Farm, through the quarry, and was lost in Inwood. We found our next in Nyland, and had a wide ring round, part of it at a fair hunting pace, by way of Temple Lane, almost to Buckhorn Weston, re-crossing the river by the Ford, and back, very slowly, into Nyland, where, after much hunting up and down the cover, he bolted into a hole, from which there was not time to dislodge him. A very small field out, though it included two of the gentlemen who rode in the point-to-point race in the afternoon.

**March 25th.—**

From the Red Lion, at Cheriton, we had a pretty gallop, as a fox was found in Mr. Dendy's

orchard, and he took us a rare race over Hatherleigh, all over the flat, finally rising the hill for Holbrook; but, leaving the house on his right, he turned down and ran sharp into Elcombe. After a turn or two here, he, or another, broke on the Lattiford side, and, running almost to the house, swung left down towards the Grove Withybed, near which we had a check. We came up the hill again and picked out a weak line past Gale's Plantation and into Cheriton Wood. Here they again got on good terms with him, and ran well to Wilkinthroop and to Horsington, where he made a sharp turn, but too late to save his brush, for the hounds, who well deserved him, ran into and killed him in a quarry by the old Cheriton Turnpike Gate. A good run of about one hour and twenty minutes. We drew the Withybed blank and the other small covers; but found in a hedgerow below, running nearly to Wincanton. The scent was not, however, so good as in the morning, and we did nothing worth speaking of with him.

**March 26th.—**

From Stockbridge we had an excellent day. We found in Whitfield, but did but little with a first fox there. The second, also, we soon ran to ground near Beerhacket, dug and enlarged him; but he was bent on destruction, and, going to ground the second time nearer Yetminster, hounds did him the favour of eating him. We then went to Bailey Ridge, whence a good fox took us towards Yetminster first, but he turned sharp back at the brook, and ran by the river side to Winterhayes, nearly into Chetnole; thence he turned left and worked towards Bailey Ridge and on to Whitfield, whence, after a little delay—hounds getting on a double line—he was forced out on the Leweston side to the Withybed, when he was viewed, and they ran him very prettily into the wood, through it, and into the gorse, on under the wall to Lillington Wood and into Honeycombe, where about five o'clock we had to leave him to his own devices, having been running for about two hours. The scent was fair, but a strong westerly wind, with occasional showers, rather interfered with it.

**March 27th.—**

We met at the Kennels and trotted straight off to Compton Castle, where Mr. Rome's foxes never fail. As usual, one was ready for us, and we rattled him in the teeth of a strong wind, almost a gale, to Littleton Hill, heading for Cadbury Castle, turned left and over Corton Hill, bearing back somewhat towards Sigwells into Bristol Gorse, and thence really hard up-wind to the Wheatsheaf Gorse, where, after much suspense, he was marked to ground. A long dig in driving rain ensued. Meantime we found another fox hard by, ran him a short ring, and killed him. He was so stiff that the Master considered him to be the hunted fox of the morning. The other fox by this time was dug out and eaten also. After this we had a nice gallop after a "stole away" fox from Ridge, past Milborne Wick, towards Poyntington Withybed, on for Holway, and over the Wheat-sheaf once more nearly to Slates, but here we came to a check, and the scent had got so cold that perseverance was of no avail, and the word was given for home.

**March 29th.—**

Was a stormy, windy, morning, and from the weather and various circumstances but few saw the really fine run from Clifton Wood. It was some little time before hounds found in that large cover; but after a while somebody viewed a fox, and the pack were quickly on the line. After a turn round the wood he broke towards the railway and crossed the river, which was in flood, and the ford, therefore, not being safe, the riders had to go some way round before they could rejoin hounds at Coker Wood. They were fairly racing, up wind, down over Abbot Hill, by Snug, on through Halstock, and, bearing a little left, passed Lower Leigh, but then swerved slightly right again to Higher Leigh, and, heading for the Somersetshire Holts, left Wick on the left, and on, through one bit of the Holts, to Knoll Wood; straight on he went by the railway as far as Colonels, whence he bore back, down wind, and into the Holts in an hour and twenty minutes. And here we practically lost him, having run a point of seven miles, the greater part of it up wind and very fast.

**March 30th.—**

Was also a rough, squally morning, in spite of which there was a large gathering at Sparkford. The first fox was found in Wearyall, and he took us down wind along the slopes of the Gallhampton Gully country, right into the town of Castle Cary, past the church, and into the yard of the Goat and Compasses Inn, where we killed, after a thirty-six minutes' gallop. A curious place for a kill! Trotted back to Sparkford Wood and ran with an uncertain scent into Hazelgrove Park, and then down wind towards South Barrow, which we left on our right hand, past North Barrow, straight on to the Lovington Covers, where we had a check. We lit the line on presently towards Alford, and lost at the end of fifty minutes' fine hunting. But the field and weather were both wild, and in the evening there were some heavy claps of thunder.

**March 31st.—**

There was a small muster at Bishop's Caundle, and when we drew Lanes and went



away there were not more than a dozen all told. Hounds ran like the wind to the river, crossing, luckily for us, by the bridge, and then on for Holwell Church to Bulhams, bearing left almost to Holwell Plantation, and into Holwell Gorse, in twenty-three brilliant minutes. On, past the Pulham Gorses, and into the road, then round the Green Man and into the New Gorse, where a rattling thunderstorm, with torrents of rain and snow, effectually lost hounds their well-merited fox. The Master drew back most carefully for him, and presently a fox jumped up under their noses out of a fence, and raced to King Stag and to the river, which was much wider than he liked, but, however, he swam it with hounds close after him, and we thought they had got him. He slipped away, by a clever turn, and ran hard for Hyde's Plantation, but, just before we got to Brickell's, another of those heavy storms came down, and, deluging the country, most unnecessarily saved his life. We found another in Holtham, and, running through Thornhill and by Hargrove, he led us a very pretty ring for five-and-thirty minutes, and then,

more slowly, through Holtham again and Sterts, to Church Copse, and at the end of an hour and forty minutes he was marked to ground in a vixen's earth on Farmer A'Barrow's land, where we left him.

**April 1st.—**

Saw a large field assembled at Warrbridge Gate. Representatives of five Hunts, Masters past, present, and future—all were there! After running through Jericho and Stalbridge Common Plantation, a fox was found in Queen's Copse, at Bagber, who made the best of his way to Golden Gate Lane, and up it, and, turning left, to Bagber Gorse; past it, and on to Haydon, over heavy country, with some pace. Turning right-handed he crossed the Lydlinch Road and the river, where the ford was deep, but the new bridge handy; pointing for Hargrove, which he passed, and, bearing away for the Somerset and Dorset Railway, we lost him, close to Bagber Bridge. After some fruitless casts we drew Lydlinch Withybed, some of the Stock Covers, and Woodbridge, but did not find again till we

got to the Holts, where we had a winding run, finally working to Ashcombe, Tripps, and Plumley, and lost, heading for Newlease. There were a good many falls to-day; both French gentlemen and many English ones returning home with an undue share of mud.

**April 2nd.—**

We went in quite another direction—to Zeal's Green. We had drawn Bagmore and Silton Wood blank, when a "holloa" re-called us to Bagmore, and hounds raced a line thence towards Silton, and to ground; the Huntsman meantime running over the same earth with half the pack, and marked his fox also to ground a little further on, in nineteen minutes. The first fox was soon bolted, and, the divided pack joining, they ran him hard towards Hunter's Lodge, over Stoke Trister Hill, by Newfoundland, where there was a check. A "holloa" soon took us on, and we ran to ground above Cucklington Wood. That earth was not disturbed, and nothing more of interest was done. Some heavy rain fell in the afternoon.

**April 3rd.—**

This week's sport ended with a long day in the Middlemarsh Woods, which were heavy and deep, and the four hours of work in them must have been tiring to hounds. The field were not called upon to do much till the afternoon, when a fox at last left the shelter of the woods and ran, rather well, through Urley Moor, over Middlemarsh Road, past Eight Acres and Broad Alders, up over the Dongeon, and went to ground just short of Pullham Lake, at four o'clock. Being within the borders of the Cattistock Hunt the Master would not dig, but took the tired pack home without their well-earned morsel. The day was fine and bright, and the changing colour of the grass warns us that the season is getting on.

**April 5th.—**

The meet was at Fifehead Neville, and, Cockrow and Badbury having been drawn, a "holloa" was heard under Deadmore Copse; and, the pack being laid on, ran up the hill, passing Cockrow to Reek's Cover, and on,

with very indifferent scent, through Lockett's, and into Woolland Copse, heading for the hills, where we lost, after running about three-quarters of an hour. Our next fox we found in Humber Wood, and followed him out to Shortwood and through the Brockhampton Covers, and up to Canning's Court Vicarage, where we bore right and made a slow line back to Humber Wood, and through it, heading for Mappowder, but swung here rather to the right, and lost ; for he had run us out of scent, and hounds could not re-gain the line. We did no more, except running hounds through Ponting's Gorse at the end of the day.

**April 6th.—**

We were in quite another country, up at Pylle Station, in Somerset. We found a fox in Dowling's Cover over the railway, ran him to the Pennard Covers as if for Cockhill, back towards Mr. Carey's, and to ground ; but he was soon dug and eaten. The Ditcheat Covers and Hornblotton Wood were drawn

blank ; also all the Alford Covers—a long and disappointing afternoon's work.

**April 7th.**—

Was a wild and windy day ; and not many faced the weather at Stourton Inn. Nor was there much to record, as the scent was so bad, and the storms so frequent, that none of the foxes, though they were well rattled through the woods, could be brought to hand.

**April 8th.**—

We did better at Five Bridges, on Thursday, when a largish field met at that time-honoured spot and trotted up the hill to Fifehead Magdalen. Hounds were scarcely in the cover before a fox was away, and gave us a short turn round ; saving its brush, however. We next found at the Withybed ; the fox and hounds swimming the river, the field had to ride round by the bridges, most of them choosing the right-hand one by Fifehead Mill, galloping up into Marnhull, where we re-joined the pack, who were running well, through the

village, down to Common Plantation, by the river, and, bearing right, had a pretty gallop, over the flying fences parallel to it, back to Marnhull; killing him there, after a pretty fifty minutes, in Farmer Smith's orchard. After this we rode back to Fifehead, and found again, but did not pursue the chase there, trotting back, instead, to Inwood. Found there directly, and ran towards Toomer Hill, hounds on good terms with their fox, heading for Stalbridge Park—a pretty little gallop while it lasted, but it was over too soon, for a check near the Park wall ended that run. Back at Inwood, another fox took us away for Martin's Wood, where we lost, in a pelting hailstorm. A large party from the Taunton Vale country were out with us to-day, and Mr. Taylor carried home the brush. Comte Vassart and Mons. Mallet rode for the honour of France, and Mr. Elliott Lees, also, was well to the front.

**April 9th.—**

Found us at Jack White's Gibbet. Our

first fox, from Lily Wood, was soon killed in the gorse outside. We then drew the Yarlington Covers, and found, but did not kill. From Elsombe we ran one to ground, who soon bolted, and ran back to his native cover. From Holbrook we ran to Waddon Down and Redlynch Gorse; here he turned, and bore back in the direction whence he came, but before reaching Holbrook he turned away for Verrington, and for a little way he ran the road. Opposite Moorhays he crossed the railway, ran parallel to it some little way, then re-crossed it, and, swinging round past Redlynch Gorse once more, worked back up Bratton Gully, where he got to ground and was killed, in about an hour and ten minutes from the find. There were very sharp hailstorms to-day, and the variableness and severity of the weather affected the scent, in spite of which we had a fair day's sport.

**April 10th.—**

A rattling snowstorm came down just before we reached the meet—Purse Caundle



Cover. Hanover was drawn blank, but from Tripp's, our next draw, hounds went away on the drag of a fox, and ran to Plumley slowly, and were then whipped off. We found again in another snowstorm in Huddlestons Gorse, ran through Frith, into Stalbridge Park, past the Wood and the farm, down almost to the Stalbridge and Templecombe road; swung back, and then crossed Landshire Lane, down towards Caundle Brake, when he ran up to Frith, and in forty-five minutes ran to ground in Frith Bottom, and was dug and eaten. It was now past two, and several of the field went home, and so missed the afternoon of a really good day. While hounds were eating him another fox had been marked to ground by the keepers in a hedge close by; he was bolted, and, after a sharp turn, made for Purse Caundle Gorse, and slowly on to Toomer, below which hounds ran into and killed him. It was past four o'clock when we found a big fox in Mr. Dodington's new cover, ran up over the hill to West Wood, to Martin's Wood, and, heading for Yenston, bore left to Templecombe Railway

Station ; turning left again he skirted the railway into and through West Wood and round to Martin's Wood again, on into Inwood without dwelling there a moment, out over Tabor Hill, running hard to Spurles ; over the hill by Bowden Gorse, again to Martin's Wood, and thence almost on his former line by Templecombe Station, and along the gulley into West Wood ; out again towards the cover we had found him in, leaving it on his right, and after dodging about a little on the ploughs—for he must have had nearly enough of it—went on to Everlanes Down, and, leaving Milborne Port on his left, went away for Coombe Hill, and on to Crackmore, and there, having run for two hours and forty minutes, the gallant, though now tired pack, were forced to leave him, at ten minutes to seven o'clock, after a hard day's work.

**April 12th.—**

A picturesque meet at Compton Pauncefoot was the prelude to a very pretty find in Mr. Phippen's Withybed at Queen Camel, and

we had a race of fifteen minutes over beautiful flying country by Weston Bampfylde towards Marston Cover; there our fox bore left and rose the hill, leaving Corton Gorse on his right and Sigwells on his left, to Bristol's Gorse, whence he turned back, and we ran up to Cadbury Castle, where several foxes were on foot; and, though we went down after a time and tried a square cover below, and Chapel Covers also, it was with no result. Wearyall and Sparkford proved blank, but better luck awaited us in Marston Wood, whence a fox went away to Corton Gorse and towards Sigwells; but the good scent of the morning was gone, and we could only walk after him, skirting Bristol's Gorse and into the Wheatsheaf, where he was marked to ground, and eventually was killed there; after which we went home, feeling that the bright promise of the morning had not been realised in the afternoon.

**April 13th.—**

We met at Totnel Corner, and found in Castles; ran well to Bide's Gorse and on to the

Grange Woods, over the earths there, and into Remedy ; there we sank the hill for Paper Wood and Alders, and on, passing Bide's Gorse, to Admiral Digby's Plantation, where he doubled back out of the drove to Castle's, by Furzyfield to Calfhayes, where we had a check at the end of an hour and four minutes. A line was presently made through the Knoll and Scevior's to Common Plantation, and up to the hills once more ; in Remedy he was viewed, and from there he swung up over the hill to Uperne Wood, where, after a short check, he was again viewed, and, hounds getting on better terms with him, ran him to ground in Remedy. He had given us a chase of two hours and seven minutes, and hounds well deserved him. After this refreshing morsel, this good dog pack found us another fox in Bide's Gorse, and ran him through Furzyfield and Paper Hill, back to his native cover, and after a short ring on the Grange Woods side he came back to Hermitage, where hounds ran into him at the end of a pretty, but very short, run. It was a good day's sport, and lovely calm Spring weather

made it thoroughly enjoyable. The Cattistock Hounds were out on their hills, and at one time we were very near them, some of our fields getting mixed for a time.

**April 14th.—**

Found a small party at the door of Butleigh Court at 11.30, the meet being half-an-hour late to allow of the Master and his hounds arriving at Glastonbury by train. The first draw was Park Wood, a tempting cover overlooking the Lydford country, but, unluckily, the usual tenant was from home. We trotted back past the house and drew the Butleigh Woods, and soon found in Mr. Neville-Grenville's side of them. The fox broke cover directly, and, crossing the Glastonbury Road, ran for Dundon Down, a sort of combe in the woods, and they ran him beautifully, never leaving the line for forty minutes, to Lord Ilchester's Wood, where he turned and came back, finally getting to ground in Callow Wood under the roots of an old oak tree. "Now, where's Mr. Gladstone?" asked a rustic, as the destruction of property

was contemplated, and it was feared the tree must come down. "King Pan," however, the clever little Blackmore Vale Terrier, was quickly at hand, and, loyally opposing the destructive policy, soon got hold of the fox by the brush and gave him to his friends the hounds. The brush was reserved for Mrs. Neville-Grenville, but the Master presented the mask to Mr. Knight, a sporting farmer of the right sort. This ended the day's proceedings, as the pack had to return to Glastonbury for the five o'clock train.

**April 15th.—**

We met at Nether Compton, and, after drawing various covers, settled down on a fox from Rimpton Gully, who ran hard for Hack Hill and Chorlock Hill, turning left-handed as if for Compton, down, off the hills, to Trent Mill, and on to the railway and river, which he crossed. Twenty minutes so far. We had to ride round to cross the river, and found hounds at a check by Mudford Brick-kiln; after some delay the line was re-gained, and we

went on for Rimpton, over Park Farm at Marston, and on to the hill where we had found him. There were two lines here, and hounds divided, so the fox saw his chance and got away—probably into Trent Gully, where the earths were open. A fine warm day, and the scent, which was bad in the morning, improved as the day wore on.

**April 16th.—**

At eleven o'clock, a good field were assembled at Foutleroi. We had a long trot to Butterwick, which was blank, but found in Longburton Gorse, close by, and ran to Six Acres and Stockbridge and the Holnest Covers, and, leaving Berkeley Gorse on the right, to Butterwick and Broke, and on for Ferney Down; this was thirty-seven minutes, best pace, and here we had an unlucky check, by which the fox got a-head of us, and, taking a turn to his right, ran back through Butterwick and Longburton Gorse, and the Stockbridge Covers, and into Whitfield, in an hour and a half from the find. The hunted fox was viewed

in the cover, but hounds were taken on to a "holloa" to Bailey Ridge, and by Totuel, to Bide's Gorse, where there were two foxes on foot; the body of the pack went on to the hills, and slowly on to Cerne Park Wood, where they were whipped off in heavy hail-storms, and had a long way home, but Lord Digby's hospitality at Minterne greatly refreshed them.

**April 17th.—**

The sixth day of a good week's sport began at the Kennels, and, though Charlton Gorse and Tennants' Wood and Brake, were blank, we found in the hanging gorse close to Maperton Gorse, past which we ran, and over the earths, and away, heading for Holton, where we had a check, but, crossing two roads, recovered the line and ran to ground in a garden in Cheriton in fifteen minutes. The fox had run up a sluice drain between two ponds; the contents of the upper one being let down upon him, he took a good look at us, but, not liking the appearance of things,



he retired for a time, but soon yielded to pressure and came out, running two fields more in the direction of Gale's Plantation; but hounds were too many for him, and killed him in the open, and never did I see a pack more greedy for their prey. There was not much more sport, though we found one fox in the Templecombe Woods, after drawing Cheriton Wood, Charlton Wood, and Stowell Plantation all blank. We made a weak line after this one towards Horsington, but he was too far in front of us; and though we touched the line again, heading back for the cover, the scent was gone, and the word was given for home.

**April 19th.—**

We had what may be called a preliminary canter in the morning, in the form of a very fast thirty-eight minutes from Short Wood, past the Nag's Head, up to Melcombe Park, and over the hill to Liscombe, where we lost. The going in the Vale was very heavy, in consequence of the rain on the

previous day. Our next, and historical fox, went away from the New Gorse at Pulham, and ran to Woodbridge Withybed, returning to the same gorse, loth, apparently, to leave the neighbourhood of the Green Man. He then broke cover a second time, and, crossing the Stock and Pulham road, ran alongside the river to Hyde's Plantation and Brickell's Wood, and on to Thornhill ; leaving Hargrove on the right he went between Common Plantation and Bagber Bridge, and swung into Prior's Down. This was enough for most people, and would have been for the fox, but a friend of his took up the running, and, jumping up under the very noses of the pack, led them on at racing pace towards the river, past Gibbs's Marsh, and then, more slowly, in the direction of Henstridge, where they whipped off at the end of very nearly two hours ; some half-dozen riders only, including the French gentlemen, having seen it from find to finish. Regret was universal at the Master's absence, a violent cold having kept him indoors. It was, perhaps, the best scent

to-day we have had this year, and the pace was good throughout.

**April 20th.—**

Was a warm, Spring-like day, and from West Hill Gate there was some pretty hound work through the length and breadth of Honeycombe, the pack accounting for their fox in an hour and four minutes, though they were almost too hot to kill him, and for some seconds, I believe, the fox and a hound sat back to back in the ditch ignoring each other's vicinity, till another hound ran in, and "who-whoop" rang through the primrose-paved woods. The Park Covers were drawn blank, but close to Haydon Lodge one of those foxes that seem to be descended from monkey ancestors, and inhabit trees, left his perch on an oak, and, jumping the Park wall, went for Hanover, and into Crackmore, where he left us.

**April 21st.—**

The meet was at Jack White's Gibbet, and we went straight to Hadsphen, found a fox

who came away down the hanging, running well and fast, towards Maryland, over the flat past Yarlington village, and away for North Cadbury, where, being headed, he bore left, and into Compton Castle, where hounds nearly had him ; but he managed to get away, and saved his brush by going to ground in the main earths on Littleton Hill, in forty minutes. This was an exceedingly pretty gallop over a most unusual line of country. We trotted back to Yarlington (calling at Woolston by the way), and found ; our fox went well away over the Clapton Earths as if for Elscombe, then headed for Lattiford, but turned down, best pace, for Maperton Gorse, where there was a long check, and we did nothing more. Both these runs of to-day were really enjoyable gallops.

**April 22nd.—**

We had a hot day at Middlemarsh, and, except that there was some pretty woodland hunting, which ended in running a fox to ground near Eight Acres, there was not much done worth recording.

**April 24th.—**

To-day was also very hot, and we had an hour's run in and about Redlynch Park, killing one fox at Godmanstone Wood, and running another from Waddon Down by Jack White's Gibbet and Deans, past Elscombe, over the Clapton Earths to Yarlinton Wood, a race of fourteen minutes. Here he went home, and we did the same.

## NOVEMBER, 1886.

<i>Huntsman</i>	...	...	GEORGE BROWN.
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<i>1st Whipper-in...</i>	...	E. TEECE.
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<i>2nd Whipper-in</i>	...	C. FOX.
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<i>3rd Whipper-in</i>	...	J. TURNER.
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Our Master is as keen as ever, for on the last day of cub hunting—Saturday, October 30th—thinking he had not been as thoroughly over his country as he could wish, he made a second day of it. Hounds met at Inwood at nine o'clock, and, after a successful morning, the pack went home, and while the field partook of luncheon in the dining-room, the men were refreshed in the servants' hall, and a second pack and fresh horses appeared on the scene. The Master and Lady Theodora, and the field, among whom were Mr. and Miss Dendy, Miss Serrell, Mr. Clayton, and Mr. C. Spicer, re-mounted, and squandered a fine show of cubs in Nyland. No noses were wanted, but it was only desired to teach the young ideas to fly on future occasions. The lesson was carried on till dark, and hounds went home by moonlight.

November 1st, 1886.—

The opening meet of this pack took place, as usual, at the Kennels at Charlton Horethorn. Breakfast was laid in the Master's room at the Stud Groom's house, and as many as liked to go in were made welcome, and had plenty of time to enjoy themselves, as hounds did not move off till quite half-an-hour after the appointed time. The yard was filled with carriages and horsemen, with a good sprinkling of ladies. It seemed as if we were taking on just where we left off last Spring; all the familiar faces were there, the most noticeable change being in the Huntsman—George Brown, from the Kilkenny, having obtained the situation—but the Whips are the same, and so we may almost say is the field, with the addition of Major Mansel, just returned from India; but no doubt five years of absence have not quite made him forget how to get over the Blackmore Vale. Mr. Rome, too, has passed the Summer in Australia, but was back in time for a few days' cub hunting by way of a "preliminary canter." Miss Dendy and Mr. and Mrs.



Hutchings had found their way down from Scotland. Lady Theodora brought over a party from Inwood, of which Miss Guest, aged seven, was one; Dr. Wiblin, Sir William Mackinnon, Mr. Luff, and Mr. Dowell, and many more were there, ready to follow the Master to Slaits, which, with Poyntington, we drew blank. A fox was at home in the Wheatsheaf; but it was one from Sigwells who gave us a gallop, and is answerable for numerous falls which occurred in the course of it. We ran him to Roundhill, through Compton, thence to Maperton, and on into Cheriton Village, where, owing to the indifferent scent, we lost. The rest of the day was spent in and around Cheriton and Charlton Woods, and thereabouts.

**November 2nd.—**

Found us enjoying a fine sunny morning at Nether Compton, where a good fox was quickly found, who went away at once by Rockley to Chorlock Hill; and on, heading for Trent, he bore along the gully down to the Mill, and so back to where we found him, and

a little further on we lost him, just across the Sherborne and Yeovil road. Potter's Lease was next drawn, and here a curious accident happened. A young hound was working busily on the railway, and took no heed of a Great Western train which came up, and, knocking him head over heels, cut his stern clean off. It was wonderful the poor beast escaped with his life. He was the prize puppy of the year, "Contest" by name.\* Forty-three minutes of slow hunting followed in the direction of Lenthay, near which he ran us out of scent.

**November 3rd.—**

A very wet morning induced many to stay at home, so the field was small and select that met the Master and his pack at Fifehead Magdalen Mill. A litter was soon disturbed in Ashley Plantation, one of whom yielded up his brush at Moorside. In a hedgerow at Marnhull another was roused, and was killed in a turnip field hard by. The next find was in King's Mill Withybed, whence hounds went

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\*He hunted on for some two years more.

away with a good head, up wind, but, being headed, the fox soon turned down wind, which answered his purpose. Common Plantation was drawn and hounds then went home. A very stormy, wild, windy day.

**November 4th.**—

Showed a great improvement both in the glass and the weather. The former was rising, and the latter had cleared. Still, the meet was small, at Haydon Lodge, though the numbers increased as the day wore on. A fox was found in the fern, which is wonderfully high this year, owing, no doubt, to the long and beautiful Summer. We galloped about after him through Goathill and across the Park, through Lover's Grove and Honeycombe, down it and almost to Thornford Village, when a "holloa" called us up again, and we got on a fresh line, which took us over the road and into Lillington Wood, out of it, and we ran a ring below; then back into Leweston Park, where he laid down. A fresh fox turned us back towards Honeycombe again, but hounds could make nothing of it. Drew

North Wootton and Snagg's Harbour, and just as we left the latter a fox jumped up in the fields outside the Park wall, and gave us a very pretty and fast thirty-four minutes, which very few people saw; and up to the Holts only five were anywhere near the hounds. A slight check here let the field get up. Recovering the line hounds marked him away at the top, and, running well, we left Caundle Brake on the right, bore suddenly left behind Bishop's Caundle, and, running sharp for Woodrow, marked him to ground in an earth insufficiently stopped on that farm. It was a very pretty gallop, and, though the fences are still terribly blind, the ground rides so perfectly as to make one forget the Winter trials of Dorsetshire mud that are before us. This finished the day, it being four o'clock or more.

**November 5th.—**

The weather seems to alternate with fair regularity, and yesterday's balmy calmness was compensated for to-day by soaking rain. Yarlington House was the meet, and that good

sportsman, Mr. Rogers, was out to see his foxes found. The first one broke from the wood by the house, and, heading first for Jack White's Gibbet, changed his mind and bore left for Hadspen, where we lost him. But presently we found another in Hadspen, who took us to Yarlington Church, and then took himself off, for we could neither see nor hear of him again. A very young litter were found in Lily Wood when we got there, but, young as they were, they were keenly alive to the necessity of self preservation, and, one of the number being deputed by the others to cut out the work, ran over Bratton Hill, and by Waddon Down, to Elscombe, where he persuaded a friend to take up the running and give him a rest. A turn or two more to Dean's Bush and Holbrook, and Lattiford, finished a very wet day.

**November 6th.—**

The weather had not improved, when the Master had a long and disappointing day from Hunter's Lodge, in the Stourton Woods. The wind and rain were masters of the occasion ;

hounds found foxes, but the scent was so bad they could do nothing with them, and it needs a more intimate acquaintance with the geography of those large woods than I possess, to be able to describe in the smallest degree where they went to. But "the cheery note of the hunter's horn" was heard at various times by Stourton Tower, in Stavordale Wood, in Brewham, Blackslough, and Cockrow till near four o'clock, when all faded in a fog.

**November 8th.**—

"It raineth, raineth, every day" will be the motto for this week, so no more need be said on the subject of the weather; only it must be borne in mind that the events about to be narrated came off in waterproofs. The meet was at West Hill Gate, and hounds soon found in Honeycombe and ran their fox along the wood to Thornford Firs and back again, and then again in that direction, and around about the wood till we drove him out into the open, and killed, at the end of an hour and twenty-three minutes. Ran through the Leweston

Woods, finding in Whitfield, and ran well to Home Bushes; back again on a weak line to Whitfield, out, thence, over the road to Yetminster, and up almost to Bailey Ridge. All this was very slow work, and we left off at Whitfield.

**November 9th.—**

Hounds met at Langham, but, owing to the atmospheric influences alluded to above, the scent was bad and the field small. A fox was found in Ringrove, who quickly made for the cover close to the railroad, and a train coming by at the time made us shudder for the pack, who, however, marvellously all escaped. They then headed for Sandley, and, running the road a short way towards Kington Magna Church, turned into the fields and made for Mr. Ayles' farm at the four cross roads, and then into Fifehead Wood, where, after dusting him up and down a bit, the hounds ran into and killed him. Another, found in front of Fifehead House, soon joined his defunct brother. Sandley was then drawn, but, with Bailey Withybed and Deptly, proved tenantless.

**November 10th.—**

At Middlemarsh, was a disappointing day, for, after a pretty sharp run through Gore Wood and out on the top, over Remedy, and into Minterne Seat, back again to Remedy, and along it to Minterne School, and back again, he finally ran once more the length of Remedy, and, with hounds close at him, went to ground there in an hour and twenty minutes, and so defrauded the hounds of their well - deserved morsel. Being in sanctuary—*i.e.*, the Cattistock country—there we left him, and, re-tracing our steps, came back to Prince's Wood, and, finding our friend at home, he led us a chase all over the woods for an hour and a-quarter, when he left, and we came home.

**November 11th.—**

We met at Warrbridge, and went to Thornhill, where we found instantly; went away, had a brilliant run, and killed and ate our fox before some of the field, I really believe, were aware that a fox was on foot. The field was large, the fox small, and the run only lasted some



ten minutes, hounds pulling their cub down brilliantly in the open a little beyond Hargrove Farm. General Parke, who never fails to provide sport for his friends, and rejoices in it, was there to see. We then went to Holtham, calling at Jericho, whence a line took us to the former cover, which we subsequently left on the far side, and, going through Sterts and the Withybed, we got to the back of Stourton Caundle; thence, rather slowly, to the Holts, by Knoll Plantation, and Rowditches, finally losing him there. On our way from there to Stalbridge, hounds suddenly picked up a line near Church Copse, and ran it merrily for a few hundred yards, but could make nothing more of it. We could only suppose it was the line of some wanderer we had disturbed in the morning, perhaps from Holtham. The scent, so good in the early part of the day, was gradually getting worse and worse, and, although a fox was seen crossing a ride in Stalbridge Park Wood, the hounds could not own it. Nor could they do more in the rest of the coppices in the Park; so the Master wisely decided to disturb

no more country under these unpropitious circumstances.

**November 12th.—**

Holnest was the meet, and Longburton the first draw. The fox ran a ring through Six Acres, Gravelpits, to Holnest Church, and back to Longburton Gorse; a pretty gallop at a good pace, of seventeen minutes, so far; thence to Butterwick, leaving King's Plantation on the left, down the Green Drove, and, bearing back rather to Berkeley Gorses and towards Holnest Church, after which we parted with him, and, going to Bailey Ridge, found another, whom we ran to Whitfield Wood, and spent the rest of the day between that and Home Bushes and Bailey Ridge, taking a different line later on by Gordon's Gorse to Six Acres, slowly to Holnest, and across the Park to the Lodge, where we whipped off at four o'clock, as it was evident that no good could come of that fox chase.

**November 13th.—**

Found the Master and his pack at

Redlynch. A fox was on foot directly in Moor Wood, and the music through the first half of the cover was beautiful, but, something having headed and turned the fox, hounds over-ran the scent, and it was a minute or two before they re-gained it, only to lose it again. The Master then took them outside the cover, where they directly hit the line, and we had a pretty ring in the open towards Walk, before returning to the cover, where, hitting a double line, we failed to see more of our hunted one. From here we went away to draw Mr. White's withybed, whence a fox broke, and hounds went away on a twisting line, hardly any one with them, till just before they marked him to ground in a field of Mr. Eastment's, close to Round Hill, where a short dig, and a hungry pack, settled his fate. After this we did not find again, Round Hill Covers and Leeks Hill proving blank ; so we trotted home in the usual rain, though a fine morning had deluded us almost into the belief that there was an exception to the rule. Lord Weymouth was out to-day from Longleat.

**November 15th.—**

It was wet and unpleasant, but, all the same, we had a busy day from Chetnole. Found the first fox in the Knoll, who went out heading for Melbury, but soon turned to Sceviour's, thence as if for Paper Hill Coverts, and, after a check, hounds ran him away for Middlemarsh, finally killing, at the end of twenty-six minutes, in Hartley, just outside the big woods. We then drew Common Plantation and Calfhayes. A fox was viewed close to the latter, and he led us towards Melbury; but scent was not good, and he soon ran us out of what little there was; and we went to Briar's Wood, where another little animal of the same useful race ran slowly towards Caswell Gorses, but, ringing back, he went along the gullies over the Brickfields and Briar's Wood, then out, heading for Melbury, up to Melbury Woods, on to the big wood, and there scent failed us altogether. So, with many weary miles between hounds and their kennel, they went home about half-past three.

**November 16th.—**

The meet was Thorn Coffin, and from there we had a longish trot to the distant spinnies near Tintinhull, where, unfortunately, the object we sought was wanting. So re-traced our steps to Vagg, drawing first a pit near the farm, and then the cover, where we routed a fox from his seclusion, only to run him straight to ground in the main earths. Another, from Waindles, would not do much more for us, as he ran three fields only, in the direction of Great Lyde, after which he was seen (or smelt) no more. From Ashington we ran a right-hand crescent by Limington Warren; but the glass, as we found when we got home, was steadily falling, which accounted for the want of scent.

**November 17th.—**

The falling glass, as usual, brought the rain, and it accompanied us to Butleigh, where the Master and the Pack arrived about half-past eleven, having come by train. Park Wood was blank, but circumstances were different in the big Butleigh Woods, where a brace were soon on

foot, close to the wire fence which divides the woods; and, hounds settling down on one, ran him to the top of the wood across the main side, where he was viewed by Charlie, thence to the Summer-house, on, over the Bridgwater Road, over Compton Hollow, past Carey Corner into Brush; running the ridge of the hill at the edge of Copley Wood, he tried the main earths, where there was no admittance. So on he went, through Lord Ilchester's long wood, then, taking a turn to the right, he sunk the Vale close to the Somerton Rifle Range, over Littleton Hill, and through the wood, straight for the River Carey. He and the hounds swam it mid-way between Somerton and Eastham Bridge; the field bore to the right, crossing the latter, and watched the pack going over Bradleigh Hill. We followed them, overtaking them near Lord Ilchester's young larch plantation. After some slow hunting, on the left of Somerton Door, over a fine wild country, where the cry of hounds had never been heard by mortal man, we ran to ground in Park Wood, in some large earths, where digging was out of the question. The

run from find to finish occupied an hour and twenty-two minutes. And hounds went home by way of the historic field of Sedgemoor, to catch their train at Glastonbury.

**November 18th.—**

A large field met the hounds at the Red Lion, at Cheriton, and a fox was quickly found, and, unluckily, as quickly eaten, in Grove Withybed. Another took himself off the while, but a third was ready, and hounds were soon after him, and away for Ashtree Copse; but this fox was but a giddy young thing, for he went round in all sorts of circles—in the course of which the Huntsman and First Whip changed colour from scarlet to drab—and presently met with his end in a hedgerow not far from his birthplace. We then trotted off in the direction of Rodgrove, and, after drawing some big doubles, found in the cover itself, two foxes falling victims without affording much sport.

**November 19th.—**

From Barnes Cross Roads, the day was mainly spent in Holwell Plantations, the foxes—whether found in Holwell Withybed or Mr. Warry's Plantation—insisting on taking refuge there. A fine, scentless day.

**November 20th.—**

A select few met at the Landshire Lane Cross Roads, and a nice day's sport followed. The hounds were quietly drawing some hedge-rows towards Prior's Down, when a fox jumped up in front of them, and, catching a view at him, away they went over the Brook and the Lane, down to Frizzle's Farm, and Sayells; here occurred a slight check, which let some of the field up, but hounds soon hit it off on the right, and with a lovely burst of music carried the line merrily over the fields and fences, which it is a treat to ride over, alongside the Cale River, giving us Bow Brook to jump, over the Sherborne Road, and into Nyland Cover, in twenty-seven minutes; dusted him up and down the wood for some quarter of an hour or so, and



then, getting on his line again, we ran nicely, over the brook again, up to Baslem's Hill, where he turned right and bore back past Nyland Withybed, and made good his escape into Nyland Thorns, though hounds were close at him. This occupied some thirty minutes. A whole litter were soon on foot in the Thorns, and, after much hunting up and down the covers, hounds were rewarded with a choice morsel, though a wet one, as they killed him in deep water in the Upper Withybed, which concluded a really good hunting day, and it was cheering to find that to-day there was certainly a good scent.

**November 22nd.—**

These hounds met at Zeals Green, and, after a turn with a fox from Bagmore towards Mere, and a turn with another round Zeals Plantation, resulting in the death of the second one, we went to Dipley Withybed, whence a fox led us away towards Shanks to Quarr Hollow, and thence, bearing left, ran straight and hard to Rodgrove, in nineteen minutes. He came out across the road, and we had some very pretty

slow hunting nearly to Writli and Stoke Trister, winding left-handed, over Horwood Drove, pointing for Grove Withybed, and there hounds got on better terms with him, and ran hard up wind to the River Cale, where it is crossed by the Cheriton and Rodgrove Road ; here, however, he got the best of it, for scent failed, and we were forced to give up after a very pretty run of sixty-five minutes.

**November 23rd.—**

There was a largish field at Sparkford Inn, and a long trot took us to Babeary Thorns, which, to everybody's disappointment, was drawn blank, as was also a small cover near it ; and also Yarcombe. This bad luck, however, did not pursue us further, for there were a brace in Sparkford Wood, one of whom took a line over the railway, and, hounds leaving the other in the cover rather reluctantly, this one got a good start, and we could only follow him slowly in the direction of Alford to seize him by the Brickfields in North Barrow. We then enquired after an old friend in Mr.

Phlippen's withybed at Queen Camel, but he was not at home, and so we dispersed.

**November 24th.—**

Pylle Station was some way off, but the crisp feeling of a sharp frost was enlivening, and so was the almost immediate find in Mr. Carey's cover by the railroad; there was not scent enough, in spite of the frost, to make a run of it, and the fox had plenty of time, after passing by the back of Mr. Carey's house, to get away for Foxearths, near which he went to ground under the High Road, so he was soon dug and eaten. Our next find was in Snooks, and our fox ran well away from there past Cocknel, heading for Withielcombe, but, bearing back left-handed, he made for the gully under Pennard House, and tried to get to ground at the Mills. Whether he succeeded in this or not it is not for me to say, as the Master, making a wide cast, hit off a feeble line only, in the swampy lane heading for Lutsham, and he whipped off at about half-past two, as hounds could not carry the scent.

**November 25th.—**

All the bright look of frost had given place to a dark, foggy atmosphere, and the White Post Gate, at Osborne, looked as gloomy as possible. After running two foxes to ground, one from Holway and one from Hack Hill, we went on to Trent, and roused another out of the turnips near Trent Gully; ran over the gully, and, bearing left, came to a slight check, but, soon recovering the line, hounds ran sharply down to Trent, through both the covers, and on, heading for Hull Mill; they turned short back at the Railway, going for Trent again, and then, turning right-handed, they crossed the road as if for Compton, and ran along the brook, right back to Barrow, in fifty-five minutes. There was another slight check, but we soon went on, passing the turnip field which had been his happy home, and once more along the gulley; thence over the railway and over Hummer Lane, past an oak tree which he, or some of his relations, often visit, and hounds worked up to him in a hedge. However, he got a start over some fine pastures, and

eventually distanced his pursuers, who reluctantly gave up the chase, at the end of two hours, at Mr. Dampney's cowbyre, in which he was believed to have retreated.

**November 26th.—**

The meet at the Green Man, at Pullham, was well attended, and an eager field were soon flying after a fox, who broke from Humber Wood, and, after a ring round the eastern side just to stretch his legs, he took us off at a very fair pace, passing Humber Wood again, by Mappowder to Shortwood, and on again, after a short check on the same side, away to the Hazelbury Brook, which he crossed, running fairly to Mr. Burden's Rectory at Hazelbury; thence, parallel to the brook towards Woolland, and, running through one of these covers, bore right, and up into Stoke Wake, and in that cover was killed; and very lucky we did not have to rise the hill, for the fog was thick on the top, and hounds and fox would soon have been out of sight. This run had lasted about an hour and a quarter. Drawing Brockington

Cover on our way back, we next found in Ponting's Gorse, but he was a faint-hearted one, for, having run two fields, he waited for hounds in a hedge, and when they arrived he only came out to commit suicide in a handy pond. It was amusing to see a hound, Brigstock, dip his head under water, pick him up, and walk ashore with his enemy's body in his mouth. This finished the day's sport, but it was not long before we were all together again, on

**November 27th.—**

At Landshire Lane Gate. A foggy, warm morning, but no scent, no sport, and, at first, no fox, for we drew many doubles, and Lady Theodora's Gorse, in vain; and it was not till we got to the Stronghold of Inwood that we found; and though we had a fair ring from there by Martin's Wood, and the Templecombe Woods, and back again, there was really nothing worth recording.

**November 29th.—**

The hounds met at the Golden Gate, at

Bagber, which is now but a name, but which once was an inn. We drew Bagber Copse and Queen's Copse, and then found a fox in Sir Richard's thick gorse; he took us, at a sort of stately minuet pace, a ring round the cover, and left us altogether near Lydlinch Withybed. We then found in the cover close behind Mr. Dawe's Farm, and, getting well away with him, were well prepared for a fine run; but the fox, not being of the same mind, went to ground almost instantly—certainly not more than three fields off. There was a talk of a terrier and a spade, but he spared us the trouble by bolting himself, having no doubt remembered a better hole on the other side of the field, to which he betook himself. This exasperating conduct met with its reward, for, being poked out with a hedgestake, hounds did not give him another chance, and it was well they took their dinner then, for they did not get another. Several were in Prior's Down, our next draw after Common Plantation, but they were unwilling to leave home, and when one was at last persuaded to do so, he went away by rail,

going a considerable distance along the line towards Bagber, meeting and stopping a train ; and then, favoured by coming night, he made good his escape.

**November 30th.—**

The great expectations at Mudford Bridge rather collapsed when nothing was found in the Hinton or Chilton Cantelo Covers ; but a long trot to Puddimore Bushes resulted in our finding a brace, one of which broke on the Yeovilton side, and away went hounds and field after him, over the brooks, heading for Chilton Cantelo Covers, and pointing for the Rimpleton Hills, across the Great Western Railway, whence, turning left, we ran on almost to Marston Park Farm. When near here, at a check, there was a “holloa” by the railway ; hounds were quickly clapped on, and they ran him to ground at the end of about an hour and a-half. Marston Cover was drawn blank, the tenant having no doubt accepted the sound of the horn in his immediate neighbourhood as a notice to quit, and so hounds went home.



**December 1st.—**

A very small field met at Hunter's Lodge. A fox was found in Cockroad, who took us into the heart of the Stourton Woods, but a worse day for hearing never was, and not much better for scent; so, after a gallop towards the Tower, and on to the Convent, it became evident that nothing could be done with that fox. Another was soon a-foot in Stavordale, but a rattling hailstorm befriended him, and some other of Nature's vagaries did as much for another from Penn Forest. So we left them and rode home in a cold air, but it was hardly clear enough to lead us to expect the frost which ensued.

**December 2nd.—**

The meet at Jack White's Gibbet could not fail, from its frosty nature, to remind us of a similar one at the same place just a year ago, when on the eighth of December the meet here preluded the cessation of hunting for a week. However, though our horses had skated a bit on the road to cover, there was not frost enough in the grass to make hunting even

doubtful, and we went at once to Elscombe, and were soon warming ourselves at a gallop towards Holton, and parallel with the Wincanton Road over the Yarlington earths, and into the cover, where they checked; soon, however, hitting it off again, and going on at a fair pace rather right-handed along the Yarlington Hangings, up towards Dean's Bush, and then, slowly, back to Elscombe, whence he went away at the low end and into Holbrook; from there, after a little delay, a "holloa" took us on to Waddon Down, away by Verrington for Wincanton, which we left on our right, over the railway, and up the hill for Bayford. Here we had a check, and, after a cast to cover the Stoke Trister side, they hit the line again by Charlton Musgrove stream, and, after following him some way towards Hunter's Lodge, we were obliged to give up and turn homeward in a very frosty evening.

**December 3rd.—**

The frost was so sharp that hounds did not throw off till past twelve o'clock. Then a

trot to Chetnole, where Calfhayes and the Knoll were drawn blank, was followed by a find in Bailey Ridge. This fox gave us a very good hunting run, at no great pace, by Home Bushes, and he had a narrow shave in the gorsy end of it, finding himself in the middle of hounds. But he slipped through them, and made for Whitfield, ran the length of it, out, heading for Knighton, leaving the gorse on his right, and on into Honeycombe; along it, across the Sherborne Road, and into Sherborne Park, where he yet may be, for at half-past three or so we left him; having been at him for over an hour and a-half.

**December 4th. —**

We met at the Kennels, and after some unsatisfactory work in the morning, a long slow hunting run followed from Spurle's Cover, by Everlanes, to Milborne Port Station, down to Milborne Wick, towards Combe Hill, when he turned again, and so on. The interest of the day lay in the persevering patient work of the hounds and the admirable way in

which they picked out a scent when there was next to none. The frost was gone, and rain threatened.

**December 6th.—**

The meet was at Westhill Gate. The rain, which was threatening, and a falling glass, led us to expect a bad scent. Nor were we disappointed, for we soon lost, in Sherborne Park, the fox we had found in Green Lane. Hounds next killed one in Honeycombe, and, going on to Leweston, we had an attempt at a gallop from the Rookery, round the small covers, and on to West Hall, where he went to ground, but was soon dislodged and eaten. We then went back to Leweston Wood, and ran away rather well; taking a swing round he went back by the withybed and the wood, to Lillington, in eighteen minutes; but was soon lost after that, as was another, who took us half way to Whitfield and back to Thornford Firs, where hounds were stopped and taken home in declining daylight.

**December 7th.—**

We met at Five Bridges, and found quickly in the Fifehead Withybed on the River Stour. Our fox went for the Fifehead Covers, over one of the West Stour farms, heading for Doncliffe, and he ran us out of scent behind Pennymore Pit. Several falls marked his career so far, but none were serious, happily. The little gorse in front of Fifehead, and also, oddly enough, all the Nyland Covers, were blank. We then went to Lady Theodora's Gorse, and hounds were scarcely put in before a fox was viewed going away. Brown clapped the hounds on, and we went away at score, and had fifteen minutes as pretty as any one could wish to see, almost straight for Stalbridge town. Here he began twisting, and took us down to Prior's Down, and out again directly towards Gibbs's Marsh, and then he bore back left-handed almost to Landshire Lane again, before he made his final point back to Prior's Down, thus giving us an opportunity of trying our horses over every possible brook and every kind of fence. In Prior's Down he meant staying, and the scent,

which had been catchy, died away to nothing; so he had his way, and we rode home by the light of a full moon. A gale followed, with torrents of rain.

**December 8th.—**

The day was excessively stormy, and the scent, I heard, very bad at Evercreech, though I believe the hounds had two short runs in the neighbourhood of Pylle and Ditchet, but I am unable to supply details.

**December 9th.—**

The meet at Middlemarsh was well attended, and those who braved the stormy weather and cold wind were rewarded by some good woodland hunting, hounds leaving the woods at one time for Remedy, where they nearly had their fox, but he escaped by the skin of his brush (for one hound had a grab at it) and got back into Prince's Wood again. From there they ran by Gore Wood and Highfield, and, after another big turn in the woods, they came out at the Hartley end. Then they raced

to Admiral Digby's plantation with a good scent, and away to Bide's Gorse, where they killed him. Hounds had been running all day, and it would have been difficult to time the run.

**December 10th.—**

From Fifehead Neville we trotted straight to Puxey, which did not respond to our call. But luck was with us at Badbury, and Mr. Connop was there to see a good fox go down to the Vale through Haydon Gorse, heading for Lydlinch Withybed; here, turning left, he bore along the river side up into Brickells, ran round it and Stock Wood and Park, to Wood Bridge Withybed, and on to Rodmore, broke on the Pulham side, and ran a good ring by Sixmead and into Brickells again, and on at a good pace by Stock Wood and the back of Hollow Hill, to Warrbridge (where the field mostly crossed), while he went over the river on the left as if for Stourton Caundle village, almost to the little Brickfield Withybed, near which Brown strained a muscle and had to hand

the horn to Ned ; then, bearing left, he ran over the open to Bishop's Caundle, and, after a slight check there, we got on the line again, and worked him slowly into the Holts, where, darkness favouring him, we had to leave him, after a good day's sport.

**December 11th.—**

We had an indifferent day from Haddon Lodge. Found a fox at once in Biddlecombe, raced past Plumley to Caundle Brake, and into Frith, where he got a temporary advantage, and we took a turn round while he waited for us in Copse House, where we joined him. He jumped the Stalbridge Park wall and got into the wood. From there we had a sharp turn on the Toomer side, into the Park again, and out as quickly, heading down the hill and to ground in the gorsey field outside Frith, dug into a stony drain, and ate him and went home.

**December 13th.—**

The news of the death of the Hon. Almarus Digby was received in the field with



great regret on Monday. When the sad tidings arrived, the hounds were killing their fox at the end of a fifteen minutes' run, but the Master at once ordered them home — a spontaneous expression of sympathy with the bereaved family which was shared by all present.

**December 14th.—**

The meet was at Lydford, and, after killing a bad fox in Naydens, we found another in West Wood, whom a sharp hailstorm befriended. Another broke from Park Wood, and we had a slow, unsatisfactory run after him to Alford, where he crossed the river by Barrow Covers, and we worked slowly after him to Sparkford; but he had got too far ahead for us, and we went home from Sparkford Wood. Brown was out for a short time, but soon gave his horn over to Ned's hands.

**December 16th.—**

We had a long draw from Zeals Green; as Norwood, Bagmoor, Silton, Bainley, and

Depty Withybed had nothing in them, though Cucklington was better provided. We had a sharp ten minutes from there, running in a crescent shape towards Frith Wood, then had a check, and, swinging back, having recovered the line, we lost him near Horwood Farm, and went home in such a cold air as betokened a frost, and ought, one should have thought, to have been preceded by a better scent.

**December 18th. —**

To-day was frosty, but there was not much bone in the ground, though our horses' hind legs gave occasional unpleasant slides in the hard gateways. The Master had heard of a fox who lived on Ivy Walls, in Henstridge village, so we first drew these somewhat unusual covers, and had not got far before our friend jumped up in front of hounds and made the best of his way over the Somerset and Dorset Railway, skirting it nearly to Prior's Down. Here there were two lines, but the Master, disregarding a confusion of "holloas," cast back, and, after a good bit of persevering work on the part of the



THE HUNTSMAN.

REV. SAMUEL DENNY.

LORD DIGBY.

MISS SERRELL.

DIGBY COLLINS, ESQ. F. GOULD. HUGH NEVILLE, ESQ.



II. W. HARKIS.

MORTIMER GUEST, ESQ., M.P.

LADY THEODORA GUEST.

GEO. LORD ROBERTS.

IN LANDSHIRE LANE.

pack, recovered the line near Henstridge Station, and, crossing the brook, ran him nicely back to Prior's Down, which we left on the left; and, passing Loader's Farm, and heading for Common Plantation, crossed the Bagber Road, and then over the Allotments to Stalbridge town, where, headed by some foot people, he turned short and ran into hounds' mouths, who were close at him, at the end of an hour and fifty minutes. Our next fox went well away in view, from the Toomer Gorse, towards Toomer Farm, over the Quarry Farm, and, leaving Inwood to his left, he came down to the Lodge, and, crossing the high road before he got to the Ash, where he had not time to call, he made for the shelter of the Church Farm Garden, in Henstridge, where they declined to put him up, so he was speedily ejected, and hounds made short work of him. We rode home under a clear sky, and every appearance of frost.

**December 23rd.—**

The meet was at General Parke's hospitable house, and he, with Mrs. Parke, gave a cordial

welcome to all comers ; a very handsome breakfast was invitingly spread in the dining-room, which was filled in re-lays by batches of hungry sportsmen. The Master arrived rather late, to give time, no doubt, for the joint disappearance of frost and viands. The latter went first, for the "bone" remained in the ground longer than we liked. About twelve o'clock, however, a move was made, and a fox quickly found, in Hargrove Cover, who took us a turn, and in a short ten minutes managed to squander his pursuers all over the place, and to take himself to ground in an interminable drain opposite the Stalbridge Common Plantation. One horse, Mr. Godwin's, was fatally staked, and a man, Frederick Gould, rode home with a broken collar bone, for the ground was slippery in places and dreadfully hard. Another fox left the "Obelisk" Cover and was soon lost, but another from "The Wood" ran to Hargrove, and, turning down, ran alongside the river, crossed it, and came up over Lydlinch Common, to Parsons' Cover, on to Brickell's, hounds hunting him most musically through

it and Stock Wood, and on to Woodbridge Withybed; then round outside Stock Park to Brickell's, and to Sixmead, having almost repeated the ring again. But this time, leaving Brickell's on his left, he headed for Rodmore, running very prettily, and on to New Gorse, took a turn round it, and made his way back to Brickell's, where, as it was getting late and dark, he was left.

**December 24th.—**

At Fontleroi; there was no scent, and though we ran two foxes to ground, one in Goat Hill and one in Mews Hill, and killed two before going home, we really had no sport to speak of. The frost seems gone. Brown was out again both these days; and, next day being Christmas Day, we may conclude with the "Compliments of the Season to all!"

Deep snow and frost stopped all hunting for four weeks.

January 20th, 1887.—

The frost being at last fairly out of the ground, hunting began again in the Middlemarsh Woods. We found a fox in Gore Wood, and, running him through Princes Wood and Remedy, he rose the hill to Uperne Wood, took a turn on the Downs, and came down to Minterne and back into the Grange Woods, and lost. Had a short run after another from Hillfield, and lost him on the hills. During this gallop we caught sight of another pack of hounds, which proved to be the South Dorset. Avoiding them the Master sank the hill again, and presently got on the line of a travelling fox, and, as luck would have it, he must needs run up the hill again. So up we went once more, only to lose him at Minterne Mill, and from here, we thought, we were going home. But it was not to be, for in another minute up came the other pack again hard after their fox, who crossed close behind us, and away went the whole pack, scoring to cry, and both together they rattled their fox to Minterne Clump, down the hill for Eight Acres, and



had run a twenty minutes' united course before they were whipped off near Minterne. It was now five o'clock, and Mr. Elliott-Lees a long way from home. The packs were divided in a field, Brown calling his hounds to him, and returning those who came uninvited. The ground rode very heavy after the recent frost and snow. It was a trying day for horses and hounds after their long month's rest.

**January 21st.—**

The hounds arrived at Montacute Station by half-past eleven, the hour named; but we had to wait a full half-hour before the train from Dorchester came in, in case it should bring any of the last night's dancers at the Dorchester ball. A few arrived, I believe, and the Master then moved off, and we went straight to Chilthorne Damer, where we found a fox, who, perhaps, being out of condition, preferred death to flight. In Waindles a more active one awaited us; he took us out, after a turn in the cover, at the top end, as if for the Brickfields, and thence to Hull Mill. The scent was good,

and the hounds close after him, so he ran on to the railroad for a few yards, then turning right he came back to the cover, through it, and out as if for Ashington. But his heart failed him, and he came back again into Waindles. He was soon viewed out, and about two fields over the road hounds ran into him in an orchard, and, though too late in the year for apple sauce, ate him with the better sauce of appetite after their forty-three minutes' run.

**January 22nd.—**

A large field met at Copse House. Our first find was in Toomer Gorse, whence a fox was viewed away heading for Broadsell. Hounds were soon on the line, and ran well by Spurles to Bowden Gorses, where he turned and ran a ring through both Spurles and back to Bowden Gorses, where he remained. But he is not there now. Having eaten him, we moved on to Caundle Brake, where we found a good fox. Hounds ran him to and through Frith, out over the fields below to Doles, and down to the Manor House at Purse Caundle; thence

to Hanover, and all along the top of it, turning down through the end into Goathill and Sherborne Park, and apparently to ground in the hole of an ash tree; but, hearing at the moment a "holloa" in the withybed close by, the Master laid on his hounds, and they ran sharply to Goathill, and on through Mews Hill and Hanover, and out, heading for 'Tripps, and through Plumley without a check, and here, somehow, a great many of the field were thrown out. But hounds, I understand, had a really fine run after this. On from Plumley, out on the top, into the road, leaving Newleaze on the left, bearing down for Stourton Caundle, and straight for Lanes, leaving this untouched on the left, to Woodbridge, all along the riverside, past Holwell Church, to Colonel Bridge, and along the road some distance, where hounds nearly had him, but at Pole Bridge he turned into the fields again, heading for Marsh Copse. He was now running short, and, though up to this point hounds were fairly racing, the end was near, and, after a few more short turns, he fairly laid down in the road before hounds,

who ran in and enjoyed a supper, of which four of the field only were spectators, besides the Master and First Whip. This really first-rate run occupied more or less an hour and twenty minutes.

**January 24th. —**

Golden Gate, Bagber. After drawing Bagber Copse blank, hounds got on to a flying fox from Hargrove Copse, and ran a twisting line, with only middling scent, to Thornhill Obelisk, and then round by the House to, and through, Common Plantation, and killed close to Drake's Copse. Our second fox found himself as we drew the Thornhill Estate; he crossed the river near Warrbridge Gate, and went for Stock Covers, but on the Common he was apparently headed, and came back right-handed towards Ricketts, Warrbridge Gate, and was lost near Thornhill Obelisk. A find in Holtham resulted in a short gallop by Common Plantation and to ground near Stalbridge, and, when he had been dislodged and eaten, hounds found their evening fox in Prior's Down. The

run was into Stalbridge Park and, through that, to Holtham, whence he returned in the direction of Stalbridge Park, and left us.

**January 25th.—**

Hazelgrove produced the first symptom of scent and sport that we have seen this year. Every comer having been cared for by the hospitable owner of this fine old mansion, Mr. St. John Mildmay, he was still further able to evince his sympathy with us—though to our regret he does not join in the sport himself—by providing us with the right animal in the right place, and a first class specimen of a travelling fox shortly left Yarcombe, with hounds and horsemen in close pursuit. The run, as far as I could ascertain, was first bearing for Annis Hills a few fields, but, being headed, the fox bore away right-handed, and straight for Babcary, crossing the road close to the Church (where a shout of “Ware wire” shocked our ears). Thence our gallant fox went straight for Lydford, but, bearing away over Wheatland, and through the Lovington Covers, ran for

Thorn, crossed the G.W.R., and rose the hill towards Castle Cary. Leaving the town on his left, he ran the Allotments, and was pulled down about a mile and a-half further on, at Pitcombe, close to the main earths. Time, one hour fifteen minutes. The hounds found again at Wearyall, and ran a large ring of about thirty-five minutes by Verigore and Maryland, and lost in the Gallhampton Gullies.

**January 26th.—**

Evercreech Junction produced a small field and poor scent. As the Master had met with an accident the day before, the horn was carried by Charley Fox, the whipper-in. Yet, notwithstanding all his efforts, patience and skill were not to be rewarded with blood. Mr. Carey's covers were drawn blank, and Cockmel produced the fox of the day. This fox took us nearly to Goose Furling, and then, bearing right, crossed the S. and D.R. to and through Folly Wood, and on nearly to Shepton Mallet, but, the scent was failing, and the further we went the worse it got, and finally our fox was

marked to ground, at the end of an hour an a-half, at Burpit House.

**January 27th.—**

Totnel Corner. A long trot to Briar's Wood rewarded us with a quick find. Our fox ran pretty straight to Whitfield and thence to Bailey Ridge ; from there by Home Bushes to Leweston Wood, and out, heading for Honeycombe, where hounds were stopped, as we were approaching a party of gentlemen shooting there ; fifty-eight minutes fast, up to this point. Finding another fox in Casswell Gorse, hounds ran very hard and fast by Ryme, and, leaving Closworth on our left, and Coker Wood on the right, proceeded by Halstock, thence by Clarkham Cross Roads to Holt's Mill, where we had to leave our fox, after a good hunting run of one hour and thirty-five minutes, some of which was quite fast enough.

**January 28th.—**

Green Man, Pulham. Shortwood, as usual, produced a fox, but luck was against him, and

also against another, which was chopped in a small withybed. After drawing a cover or two blank, we found in Holwell Gorse, and ran nicely in the direction of the New Inn, bore back left-handed, and ran as if for the Stock Covers ; bore left-handed towards Woodbridge, and killed near Bulhams. But the scent improved in the afternoon, and we had a fast run from Holwell Plantation. Running over Newland, by Glanvilles Wootton, over the Dongeon, and thence by Beaulieu and Shortwood, raced under Hazelbury Brian, to Stoke Wake Cross Roads, and there the best of it ended, for though hounds hunted back to Shortwood, they were obliged to give over the pursuit there for want of scent. The time of this run must have been about an hour and a-half.

**January 29th.—**

Hounds did not hunt, owing to the Master's accident of Tuesday.

**January 31st.—**

We met at the Red Lion, Cheriton, and



had a very indifferent day. The foxes were not at home in their usual haunts, and we were drawing a hedgerow when one jumped up and ran for his life to an orchard not far off, where he went to ground. He was soon dislodged, and gave us another short gallop to a trip under a farm gateway. Ejectment was the order, and he did not give us another run.

**February 1st.—**

The meet at Lydford produced nothing, and, after a long draw through Babcary Thorns and Hornblotton, and all the Alford and Lovington Covers, we found one of our friends at last in Sparkford Wood. This fox took a somewhat unusual line by the Cadbury Laurels, over the brook and along it, bearing onwards between North Cadbury and Verigore, pointing for Woolston, down to Yarlinton, on to Clapton, away to Maperton and over the earths, on to Charlton and Cheriton Woods, and here, after running an hour and a-half nearly, hounds were stopped, by moonlight—luckily for them very near the kennels.

**February 2nd.—**

A very bad, scentless, windy day left nothing to record of the Stourton Woods, though a fox was run to ground near the source of the Stour.

**February 3rd.—**

Clifton Wood was a melancholy blank, but while hounds were drawing Lenthay Moor Charley “holloaed” a fox in a water meadow, who jumped up in view and ran over the water towards Honeycombe, by West Hill Gate, Lovers’ Grove, and Sherborne Park; through Goat Hill, and, after a turn round there, he paid the debt of Nature in Hanover, after leading us a chase of something over an hour’s duration, at a fair pace throughout.

**February 4th.—**

Found a good field at Fifehead Neville, and we found a good fox in Haydon Gorse; ran him to Badbury and through Puxey (where a hound got wantonly ridden over) down over the heaviest of heavy meadows, with rather

severe fencing, to the union of railway and river under Sturminster, and back to Bagber, and lost. Our next find was in that swampy expanse of Deadmore Common, and from there our fox took us straight, and quite fast enough, to Puxey, and then, twisting rather, to Bagber, and, passing Queen Copse, we marked him to ground in Golden Gate Lane ; here a fox jumped up by the brook, ran sharply by Queen Copse, and on for Thornhill, swung right at the river, and made for Bagber Copse, but did not stop there ; and, after another shorter, similar turn, we lost him near Bagber School. A very tiring day for horses, and hounds, too, but better for the foxes, who all preserved their lives and brushes.

**February 5th.—**

A lovely day, and the meet was at the Kennels. We found directly in Charlton Gorse, and ran a race by 'Tennants' Wood and Maperton Gorse, and to ground in Maperton Firs, in very rocky soil ; so the digging partook of the nature of quarrying, and the Master did not

wait for his fox, but took us off to Charlton Wood, where hounds soon took up a line outside the cover and ran with a good cry through the Cheriton Woods, across the Templecombe Road at the Red Lion, Cheriton, back again by the Red Lion, all along the gully into Charlton Wood again, and on to Charlton Gorse, where hounds ran into him and ate him. A very pretty spin of some thirty-three minutes. We found again in North Templecombe Wood, and ran fast (the pack dividing) for Cheriton Wood by Hull Gully, and to ground. He was got out and gave us another turn through the woods, and to ground in an orchard outside, where he was dug by moonlight, and hounds went home, after supper, towards seven o'clock.

**February 7th.—**

The Fifehead Woods rang merrily with the Huntsman's horn, and awoke the sleeping foxes, one of whom gave us a gallop past the house to West Stour and back again, down to the withybed, across Sayell's Farm, and very

prettily and fast to a fence close to Prior's Down, where he sought shelter, and whence a terrier dislodged him, and hounds ate him. Prior's Down was then drawn, and we ran over the brook across that charming vale under Stalbridge, over the Sherborne Road, turning up left and almost to Yenston; then, turning below Henstridge village, ran back to Prior's Down, in forty-seven minutes. He hung a bit in cover, but the busybody pack made it too hot to hold him, and out he went again, bearing up to Stalbridge Park; a long check, but they recovered the line, and, hunting it beautifully over a bit of plough, and then across the pasture, they marked the line into the wood, forced him out past the Dairy Farm to the wall; along it, inside, to Grove House, and down to a cottage in the town, and to ground in a tub in an outhouse. So hounds made short work of him, after being at him, all told, for two hours and twenty-five minutes. A very pretty day's sport.

**February 8th.—**

We met at Marston, but did not have much

to do, for our only fox went from Podimore by a rather circling line to Annis Hills in twenty-three minutes, and, though hounds marked a feeble line thence by Babcary and Charlton Adam, back towards Podimore, they could make nothing of it; and we did not find again all day, Annis Hills and all the Queen Camel neighbourhood proving blank.

**February 9th.—**

A very cold morning greeted us at Ven, and hunting seemed very doubtful. The Master, however, decided to try round the neighbourhood, and hounds ran a fox from the end of East Hill through Ridge, and then wandered after him, or another, towards Poyntington, and Wheatsheaf, and Clatcombe, eventually killing one at the back of Poyntington village; but jumping was impossible, and riding a service of danger, which not many attempted.

**February 10th.—**

Nor did many try it at Jack White's Gibbet, where the Master indulged in a little cub

hunting, and went home early. Indeed, this week, hunting has "got small by degrees, and beautifully less;" for on the 11th hounds went home from the meet (which was West Hill Gate), and on the 12th it was far too slippery to hunt at Compton Castle; so the Master took his pack round Poyntington way for exercise, and had the luck to find and kill a fox, without injuring anybody except him. And he deserved his fate, for hounds fairly wore him down in a race over two fields behind Milborne Port, and then they went home. Other people were walking about with skates in their hands, if not on their feet, and we seem to be beginning a second winter.

#### **February 14th.—**

The ground was still hard when we met, at twelve o'clock, at the White Post Gate, at Osborne; for the frost, though never severe, still holds its own. Riding was anything but pleasant, and we galloped cautiously after hounds, when, having found a fox in Holway, they ran him to Sandford and up the hill by

the Rifle Pits again, and back to Holway and to ground. Leaving Charley Fox there to dig his namesake out, we went off to Crackmore, and had the good fortune to kill one of a happy family there without running into danger ourselves; after which most of us went home.

**February 15th.—**

At Mudford Bridge, before moving off, the Master drew the field near him, and (quoting as I am from memory) he spoke nearly as follows:—“Gentlemen, and Ladies,—I wish to say a few words to you. There is a subject which has been causing me some annoyance, and has been a matter of considerable thought and anxiety to me, respecting the hunting, especially in the North-West part of my country. And when I tell you that last Tuesday I sent home, in the middle of the day, six hounds more or less damaged from having been ridden over, and that one of them has since died, you will understand what my feelings must be. I have observed that whenever hounds run a fox in this, ‘the flying,’ part of the country, the field ride like a



body of excited schoolboys on the backs of hounds, in the most thoughtless and unsportsmanlike manner. Now, gentleman and ladies, I am more concerned for the limb and safety of a Hunt servant, and the life of a foxhound, than I am for the life of a fox, and I am determined to put a stop to this sort of wild work for the future. I well know what is the cause of it all, and I understand that emulation is at the bottom of the mischief, for I have been young myself, and over-ridden hounds, I dare say ; but I say advisedly, I have never done so when warned by the Master to stop and to give hounds room. I am sorry to say I do not observe that my warning words are fairly listened to, or that when I request the field to hold hard they take any notice. Only the other day, I saw some one jump so close to a Hunt servant, that if the former had fallen a serious accident would have taken place. I also saw a hound jumped on, and the Huntsman unduly pressed when he was making a cast. I have no wish to know who jumped on the hound, as I have no desire to identify the striker with the stricken, nor is it

pleasant to me to have to find fault and be continually saying 'hold hard.' I have thought the matter over carefully and have determined that I must protect the Hunt servants—(hear, hear)—and that the hounds shall not be ridden over—(hear, hear)—and it is quite possible to ride hounds off the line of their fox, by pressing unduly upon them, without actually touching one. Such being the case, I now beg to give you fair notice that if the field will not yield to my request not to press hounds, or if I see, or hear, a hound ridden over, I shall exercise the prerogative that will be more galling, perhaps, to Master and Huntsman than any one else—that is to say, if I am to be disregarded I shall not hesitate—in the interest of Hunt servants and hounds—to stop hounds and take them home. And I look to all true sportsmen here present to support me in the execution of the duties of Master, which, though arduous, can be made pleasant by their good-natured aid. The older sportmen can instruct the younger how to ride properly to hounds, and this should be learnt by the fireside, as I cannot have the

lesson taught at the expense of my Hunt servants, or my pack." The Master's remarks were received with great and evident approval, and, though I cannot be sure of the exact words, I think I have conveyed the spirit of them. Hounds then moved on. After drawing the Hinton and Cantelo Covers blank, a fox was moved in Ashington, who ran to Mudford, and by Waindles towards Brimsmore, heading for Preston, and he finally ran us out of scent in Brympton, where many of the field left, for the ground was still very hard and riding unsafe. The hounds drew a little longer without finding, and soon went home.

**February 16th.—**

We met about twelve o'clock at Purse Caundle Manor House. Found directly in Plumley and ran down to Woodhouse, up, and through Plumley again to Stourton Caundle, passing Haddon Lodge; he then took another swing through Plumley and went for Newleaze, leaving it on his right; then to Doles, Frith, into Stalbridge Park, and out again for Church

Copse, and Pile Lane; back by Haddon and Stourton Caundle, to Holtham Withybed, where a single hound held the line on. All this was very slow and marvellous hunting, for there was next to no scent, and the way hounds worked perseveringly on, was wonderful. We got up to our fox on Mr. A'Barrow's Farm, for he jumped up in view, heading for Stalbridge, where he tried every garden and pigstye, and was at last last killed in a passage of a cottage, after dodging us for very nearly three hours.

**February 17th.—**

We had a very bad day from Buckhorn Weston. There were few foxes and much frost. But a thaw followed.

**February 18th.—**

We could get about fairly well in the Middlemarsh Woods, to which we trotted straight from Holnest Pound. We found on the Common and ran to Holnest Park, where our fox went to ground, but was dug out and

eaten. Another from White Horse Woods ran out to Woodfalls over the hill, and back to Broad Alders, and out again through Woodfalls, where we killed him, and then went home.

**February 19th.—**

From Henstridge Ash, we found almost directly in a double on Moon's Park, and, after a sharp run of about four minutes, killed close to the Sherborne Road. Found our next in a wide double leading to Higher Nyland, ran him hard to and through Lady Theodora's Gorse, over the railway by Yenston, and to Martin's Copse, in fifteen good minutes; here a check, and possibly a change of foxes, for we went on more slowly, by West Wood and over the railway—where a train pulled up in time to save the pack—into North Wood, out along the railway. Checked at Stowell, and hit the line again by the railway, where hounds made an unlucky turn and ran heel, by which the fox gained some precious minutes. Catching them up, however, the Master took them on to the flat under Laycock

Hill, and worked the line slowly on, but in vain. Found in Broadsell's, and ran by Spurle's and Red House Farm, into Inwood, where several were on foot directly, and hounds divided in different directions; finally the Master worked a line out over Bowden, marking him to ground on Toomer Farm. It was too late to dig, so he was left to enjoy a quiet Sunday.

**February 21st.—**

Met at Sparkford Inn, and having, unfortunately, drawn Hazelgrove blank, they went on to Wearyall, where they found, and ran down over the Galhampton Gullies, heading for Wheatland, but here our fox bore back over the hill to North Cadbury, on to Galhampton and Woolston; but there was not scent enough to press him, so, after some twisting, slow, hunting, we were just giving him up, when we were "holloaed" on to Castle Cary, and found our fox to ground in a box in Mr. Boyd's factory. It is needless to say that he paid the penalty of his intrusion. A lady had a bad fall to-day, and got down in a ditch under her

horse, but was, fortunately, extricated uninjured, though much shaken.

**February 22nd.—**

Found us at Warrbridge; a fox was soon on foot in that excellent cover, Brickles. He was reluctant to leave it, but finally made up his mind to explore the world outside, and, setting his head for Rodmore, ran rather prettily to, and through it, towards Bulhams, and then, turning towards Holwell, hounds divided, ten couple going on with Brown and Charley; while the other half went with the Master and Ned, by Major Warry's Plantation, Holwell Church, back to Rodmore, on to Stock, South Common Plantation, and over the river, where they joined Brown's pack, and went together to Brickles. The Huntsman, meantime, with half the field, had run rather prettily from Holwell Church to Woodbridge, Lanes, and the Holts (where they nearly chopped a fresh fox), and then joined the Master on a very faint line. We next had a run from Thornhill by Warrbridge to Bagber, but our fox turned sharp

round at the School, and, running down over the river, went to Stalbridge Common Plantation, then back, Thornhill way, to Bagber Copse; here he swung left for King's Mill Withybed, where he crossed the river and made for Marnhull. Here he roused a fresh fox, a mean expedient to save his brush, in which he succeeded, and the fresh one also got off scot free, for, having run for about three hours, we left off, rather late, and rode home—a good many of us with muddy coats.

**February 24th.**—

We met at Jack White's Gibbet, and found in Hadspen. Ran very hard and fast for fifteen minutes for Yarlington Church, just short of which our fox declined to join the sport any further, and disappeared in a sandy hillside. He was dug out, and, before any one could help it, hounds had him, and another, and were rolling down the steep bank altogether in mixed confusion; much to the surprise of a man whom they bowled over and rolled on with them. Yarlington was not exhausted after this, for a



fox was found directly, but, by means of too many "holloas," saved his brush. Another, found in Holbrook, took a turn to Elscombe, and back to Holbrook, where, a trip being open, he retired and remained.

**February 25th.—**

From Pulham we had a real old-fashioned run, involving many falls, many adventures, but, I believe, no misfortunes. Our fox went away from Rooksmoor, where he took a swing round on the Stock side, and then on to Deadmore Common; through the covers, and, leaving Charity Gorse on his right, went left over Pulham Mill, where there was a slight check; but Brown soon recovered the line, and went on close past Shortwood, on the right of it, almost to Brockhampton. Here he turned left, and, leaving several of his ardent pursuers cooling themselves in the brook, went on to Mappowder, where, considering he had done enough for our amusement, on which he had bestowed an hour and fifteen minutes, he took himself off, and we heard no more of him.

We then had a long trot back to Badbury Cover, where we found directly, and ran by Haydon Gorse to Puxey, back to Deadmore, Rooksmoor, and Lydlinch, whence he headed back to Haydon Gorse, and forfeited his brush there, very near where he started from about an hour before.

**February 26th.—**

The sport began at one Compton (Nether) and ended at another (Compton Castle). Potter's Lease was blank, but Charley was at home in Farmer Stacey's turnips, and almost directly hounds divided, one pack killing their fox, the other running to ground; but both were realised. No foxes in Trent, but one from Rimpton Hill obliged us with a run, through Marston Cover to Littleton Hill, and into the laurels at Compton Castle, where, as I said before, we left off.

**February 28th.—**

Scent has been bad all this week, so I have not much sport to record. Rain would do good,

but does not seem likely to come, and it was as dry and cold as possible. The meet was at Chetnole, and a fox, which we found in Carswell Gorse, ran to Clifton Wood, and nearly baffled us there; but hounds hit him off again, and pushed him out over the water, back by Closworth, and very slowly to Coker's Wood, and could mark him no further. Went back to Chetnole and found in the Knoll, but no particular sport followed, for scent got worse as evening drew on, and we could make nothing of it.

**March 1st.—**

From Montacute no sport ensued, either, there being a lack of foxes.

**March 2nd.—**

Better fortune attended us. The meet was at the Kennels, and the Master moved on, soon after eleven, in the direction of Compton Castle, but did not get there, for hounds got on the line of a fox in one of the outlying fields, and ran him rather well to Sigwells, where he took

a turn and came back by way of Bristol Gorse to Charlton Horethorne village; but the very close neighbourhood of the Kennels had no attraction for him, and he turned away for the Wheatsheaf, out by Ugly House and the Cleaves, and once more to the Wheatsheaf Gorse, which he left to meet his fate, hounds pulling him down outside it in the open, after a run of a little over an hour. We next had a pretty find in Bristol Gorse, and a long slow run by the Slaites, the Wheatsheaf, Corton Hill, to Sigwells, and home again; and here they nearly had him, but he made his way on to Poyntington, and was lost in the long shadows of a sinking sun.

**March 3rd.—**

We met at Creech Hill; there was a long and fruitless draw, Creech Hill, Milton, and Pink Wood all proving blank; finally we found in Cogley, and ran towards Charlton Musgrove, and, after a slow, cold run, or rather walk, ended in a sharp burst and a kill.

**March 4th.—**

The meet was at Marston Magna. We had a long trot to Podymore, which we might have spared, as there was nothing in it, and, in the touching words of the popular song, "Oh! what a surprise," there was nothing in Annis Hills, either, nor in Babcary Thorns, nor in Yarcombe. Hounds, however, were no sooner in Mr. Bennett's laurels at Cadbury than out came the little red rover we wished to see, and he raced to Cadbury Castle, and got to ground in eight minutes. Another, though, took his place, and we ran to Littleton Hill, Sigwells, Bristol Gorse, and the Cleaves, past the Wheatsheaf Gorse, and lost him, after about an hour's run, heading for Holway. There was a freezing fog all the morning, and the ground under the trees was whitened with solid little bits of ice that kept falling off them.

**March 5th.—**

Of all the scentless days this week this was the "scentlessest"—if I may coin a word. Every hedge, tree, and bramble was drawn

in vain in Stalbridge Park; and, though foxes had been seen but a few minutes before here and there and everywhere, they had become invisible and deodorised before hounds got near them. We certainly found one in Toomer Gorse, and he appeared to have gone in the direction of Broadsell and Bowden, but his course is veiled in mystery. Three ivy trees in Gospel Ash failed to produce the fox who was expected to be there; and it was not till late in the afternoon that hounds got on a drag near Milborne Wick, and, running to ground in Ridge, a short dig revealed their supper, which they quickly discussed, and went home.

**March 7th.—**

The meet to-day was at the Red Lion, Cheriton, and we drew Grove Withybed, whence a fox went away rather well for Rodgrove, but there was not scent enough for hounds to press him and keep him straight, so he wandered about for some half-hour or so, and we presently marked him (or another) to ground

near Horlock. Out he had to come, but in he went again, a little nearer Wincanton. Leaving experts to dig him out, we went on to Stoke Trister and found a fox—probably a hunted one, from the ease with which he succumbed. Having disposed of him in the usual way, we found again directly in Cucklington Wood, and ran a ring by Writh and Shanks, where he turned left and made for Hunters' Lodge and back again to the Stoke Trister hangings, where we lost him; and this, our last fox, retained his brush.

**March 8th.—**

There was a largish gathering at Fontleroi, whence Marsh Copse was drawn blank, also Ferney Down, but the wily fox was at home at Broke, and heard us coming. Hounds soon got on his line, though, and ran him well over Butterwick Common, the Stockbridge Covers, and to Leweston Wood, in twenty-three minutes; thence on by Green Lane and North Wootton Copse, and into Sherborne Park, wherein our fox escaped us, as did also Brown, who, having

something in his eye, left us to go home, and the Master assumed the horn. We went then to the Holts, and, finding in Rowditches, ran hard by Marsh Copse and Buckshaw Brake, across the river, and back by Fontleroi to Rowditches again, where his family helped to save his brush, and, by their numbers, succeeded in doing so; and certainly the luck lay with the foxes.

**March 9th.—**

From Henstridge Ash the Master took his pack to Nyland, where we found directly; a too eager field went away on the back of the fox, omitting the hounds, so the Master would not go on, on this line, though it promised to be a good one, Prior's Down way (and the run, by the way, was enjoyed by the Second Whip and one hound, who both got to Prior's Down before they could stop each other). Meantime, another fox went away at a good pace for Temple Lane and the Upper Nyland Withybed, through it, back to the lower wood, and out of it directly, heading for the Cale River, which we crossed by a useful



bridge; and then had a most lovely gallop, straight and fast, for forty-three minutes, towards Buckhorn Weston. At the end of this time hounds suddenly threw up, just as a sportsman joined us from the right, and said there was a dead fox lying in the green lane hard by. And, by degrees, it dawned upon everybody that it would be well to mention it to the Master, especially as another gentleman had rode up and remarked that he had seen a single hound jump out of the hedge after it, bowl it over, kill it, and run off, modestly saying nothing about it, to join the pack. This hound was Woffington. This was really a pretty gallop, and another was in store for us, for, getting by degrees back to Inwood, a fox went well away for Martin's Wood, Bowden, Spurles, to East Hill and Creudles; back to Broadsell and Toomer Wall, over it, and now, hunting more slowly, he headed for Henstridge Ash, and we eventually marked our fox to ground in a garden in the village, and, with the help of spade and terrier, completed the brace, which made the day's total. Mr. D. Collins and Mr. Walter Shaw-Stewart were out.

**March 10th.—**

The meet was at Totnel Corner; the fox was at Sweethills. On leaving, he took a swing round by Bailey Ridge and back, and then away to Gaulpits, Home Bushes, and Whitfield; thence, after hanging a little in cover, away for Stockbridge, and by Gordon's Gorse and Home Bushes, winding slowly back again to Whitfield. After some delay there, hounds came out on the Yetminster side and ran at a fair pace over a very unfair country (some of us thought) to the back of Chetnole village and to ground. It was a difficult run to time, and my watch was not equal to the task. By the time the kill was over, however, it was distinctly time to go home.

**March 11th.—**

From Mudford Bridge we went straight to Chilthorne Damer, and from there had a slow run towards Montacute, near which place we lost. Found again in Ashington Clump, but hounds did not get away on good terms with him, and scent was very flashy and uncertain,

so, after about twenty minutes in the direction of Mudford, we lost him, too, and left for home.

**March 12th.—**

We met in an icy north wind at Bagber, and never got warm till near two o'clock, by which time we had had a racing quarter-of-an-hour's gallop from near Sayell's Farm. We had a flying find, and ran up to Inwood by way of Henstridge Marsh and Lady Theodora's Gorse, where the fox disdained the cover, and passed in front of the house, and went on by Quarry Farm to Spurles, Thorns, Crendles, down to Milborne Port, over some queer country at the back of the School, and on, now slowly, leaving Combe Hill on the right, and bearing left towards, and eventually with, Crackmore, where he was viewed dead beat. He pulled himself together, though, and made one more effort, getting over the open to the railway, but failed to cross it, for hounds pulled him down on the metals opposite Osborne, thus finishing with blood at the end of nearly two hours and a quarter.

**March 14th. —**

The snow has spoilt sport, and even to-day the ground was so hard that hounds did not throw off till twelve o'clock. They found a fox in Short Wood, and ran with very bad scent to Mappowder, thence by Hazelbury, and into the clergyman's garden, where the fox jumped on to a wall, and somehow mysteriously disappeared. It was at the very beginning of this run that Mr. Digby Collins met with his bad fall, his horse slipping and rolling over on him. From Hazelbury hounds came back to Humber Wood, and, having drawn it, and Ponting's Gorse, blank, we next tried Holwell Gorse. Found there, and ran towards the Green Man, into the New Gorse, and on, on a very weak line, towards Rodmore; back, bearing left by Warry's Plantation and Holwell Church, and slowly back to Holwell Gorse, where we left him, and rode home in snow showers, which by midnight deepened into the twenty hours' fall, which has again robed Dorsetshire in white.

**March 23rd.—**

After about ten days of frost and snow the hounds resumed hunting at Redlynch Gate. There was wood-cutting going on, so we did not find at Redlynch itself, but from Godmanstone Wood a fox went away, setting his course for the Park, then by Godmanstone, into Cogley, where he took a turn, and then went out on the Bruton side, near which town we lost him, and did not find again.

**March 24th.—**

At Five Bridges. Found directly in Fifehead Magdalen Wood, went out towards the river, and back again over the Avenue Field (where a man “holloaed” a dog in mistake for a fox, and nearly got the hounds’ heads up), bore left along Stour Hill, crossing the Shaftesbury Road, away for Sandley, then by Quarr to Buckhorn Weston Church, below it, slowly parallel with the railway, and on the Tunnel Head, where we lost him in a hailstorm. The next move took us to Nyland, where we found, and ran rather nicely over the Cale River to

Kington Magna, but then resumed slow hunting; and, wandering on along Kington Hill, came in the direction of Fifehead. But he had the best of it, and the stormy weather was all in his favour.

**March 25th.—**

We met at the White Post Inn, at Rimpton. Drew Hinton, Chilton Cantelo, Marston, Rimpton, and Trent, and never found a fox till we got to Trent Barrow, and here, having narrowly escaped being chopped, our fox ran sharply to Trent Gulley; and then, after this short and pretty gallop, he wandered about towards Sandford Orcas, and was finally marked to ground in Marston Park. We afterwards found another in Corton Gorse, and ran by Sigwells and Littleton Hill to Compton Castle, and there he may be now.

**March 26th.—**

There was a good deal of wind, and the meet at Copse House was small, but grew larger

as we trotted through Stalbridge Park to draw some doubles in the Vale close below Stalbridge, and had high hopes of a gallop over that lovely country, which were dashed by the total absence of the necessary quadruped. A long trot then took us to the Holts, where a single hound, Denmark, got on a line, and, joined by the Master and the pack, took us on to Plumley, away thence towards Pile Lane, which we left on the right, and on to Frith. Here hounds divided, the Master going away with only part of the pack towards Church Copse and Stalbridge Park, where we had news of our fox, as he was seen only a minute a-head of us ; down to Landshire Lane, and across it, heading for Inwood, but as both Whips and so many hounds were absent, it was impossible to account for him. Meantime Charley and Jack were doing their best in Caundle Brake to stop the body of the hounds. We found later, in the end of Plumley, ran nicely to Frith, on, heading for Inwood, and lost near Bowden Lane, towards six o'clock. A long, tiring day for hounds and men —and disappointment—though we had

opportunities for displaying our jumping, which some indulged in rather too eagerly for the sport, or the safety of the pack.

**March 28th.—**

The hounds met at the Kennels, and, though there was not much scent, they ran best pace from a little cover under 'Tennants' Wood, snatching at their fox almost all the way, till he went to ground in the Wood, near the Lodge, at Compton Castle. He was soon disposed of, and a scattered field gathered together by degrees to celebrate his obsequies. The rest of the day was spent between Compton and Cadbury Castle; and one fox was chopped near Cadbury House, and another went to ground.

**March 29th.—**

From Warrbridge Gate we had a better day. A fox from Hollow Hill on Lydlinch Common gave us a quick gallop towards Warrbridge, then along the river under Thornhill, crossing it at the ford, and on to



Bagber, in twelve minutes. Being probably blown, he retired to ground to recover his wind, but soon bolted himself, and, re-crossing the river, and passing the 'Three Boars' Heads, he went on, leaving Lydlinch Church on his right; here a gentleman in red got a fall by galloping as hard as he could go at a deep drop; then on by Lydlinch Common, leaving Stock on his left, to Stroud and Lanes; and then, more slowly, to the Holts, where he ran us out of scent after a forty-eight minutes' run. The afternoon run, though occupying nearly two hours first and last, will also be recorded by the vulpine race as one of their many triumphs over mankind, for, in spite of galloping in and out of Stock, Brickles, and Woodbridge, once even getting to Rooksmoor, when we thought it was all right, we could not kill him, and hounds went home about five o'clock as hungry as when they started, or more so.

**March 30th.—**

We met at Jack White's Gibbet, and in

spite of the counter charms of Crewkerne, there was a fair field. We ran from Yarlington Wood, by the house and cover, over Clapton Earths, where there was a check; but they soon recovered the line and ran to Elscombe, racing thence very prettily over the open towards Woolston, and on; and ran into him handsomely after about two hours' work—as it was only fast by fits and starts, and very pretty hunting. We found again in Holbrook, and ran by Elscombe, towards Yarlington, and away for Woolston, but presently lost him, heading for Maperton.

**March 31st.—**

From Zeals Green we intruded on a neighbour's country, for a good fox from close to Zeals House took us first to Norwood, and then over the Downs up White Sheet Hill, but he was headed, and, turning down, came close past Mere, on for Charnidge, which he left on his left, going on to Knoyle Bushes; and he tried to take refuge in a trip on Barrow Street Farm, but was at once poked

out by a pole, into hounds' mouths, at the end of something like an hour. After drawing various covers in the home direction, we found in Cucklington Wood, and ran nicely towards Rodgrove and over that beautiful flat on to Stileway, over Coneygore Hill, and, bearing back left-handed, he ran us out of scent, though we wandered after him, picking up a faint line here and there, back Rodgrove way, and left off in heavy rain, for a wonder, about half-past four.

**April 1st.—**

Met at Stockbridge, and found a fox who was no April fool himself, for, after leading us a pretty gallop from the Gorse under Leweston Wall towards Loughburton and back, in fifteen minutes, he left us altogether in Leweston Wood. Spent the rest of the day in Knighton Gorse, Thornford Firs, and so on, with no success worth recording.

**April 2nd.—**

A small meet at Tripp's Gorse, which

gathered like a snowball as the day went on. We found in Tripp's Gorse, ran with a very good scent into the Holts, and through them, bending back, by Haddon, to Plumley, where he took one turn, and no more, for hounds caught and killed him there, at the end of thirty minutes. We found another in Windmill Hill, but could not account for him; then went to Hanover, found, ran to Ven, back to Hanover, and nearly to Purse Caundle, heading for Tripp's; but hounds, being ridden off the line, had no chance, and the fox consequently got the best of it, and we went home, after running hounds through the smaller Ven Covers.

**April 4th.—**

Found us all at Bagber; the usual absentee being scent. A bob-brushed fox from Spar Copse led us an hour's slow dance over the Marnhull country, and we lost him at Bagber. Found another in Thornhill, and killed him near Bagber in the afternoon.

**April 5th.—**

There was more scent, and we had a gallop of thirty minutes from the Knoll, near Chetnole, and lost at Admiral Digby's plantation. The meet, I nearly forgot to say, was at Totnel Corner. We did not find at all till two o'clock, and, after the run above-mentioned, we found a second fox in Bailey Ridge, and ran by Leigh and Batcombe, and up the hill to Sydling Barn, and lost about five o'clock, and a long way from home we were; but it was no matter, as we had a real good day's sport.

**April 6th.—**

The Master was able to be out again, and brought his pack to Haydon Lodge. We found in Goat Hill, and, after a smart ring round the cover, killed almost directly in the field adjoining. No more sport followed, though we found a fox in Crendles, but he was unwilling to enter into the spirit of the thing, and retired abruptly.

**April 7th.—**

From Holnest Pound we went to Longburton Gorse. A fox, to oblige us, took a turn by Six Acres, Stockbridge, and Whitfield, but, after pursuing him in vain for about an hour, we gave him up, and found another in Butterwick, and ran him slowly about, losing him eventually at Glanvilles Wootton. A bitter cold wind blowing stongly all day.

**April 9th.—**

The meet was at the Kennels; the wind was still Easterly — for consistency's sake, perhaps, at Easter. Scent was better, for, after an uneventful morning about Charlton Gorse, ending with going to ground there, we had a good hunting run in the afternoon from Cheriton Wood, by Dodington's Plantation and Stowell; and eventually, after some slow, scientific hunting, leaving the Templecombe Woods and Horsington on the right, hounds ran into their fox in the open, behind Mr. Bewsey's House, in South Cheriton, in forty-six minutes, after which we went home.

The tally this year, after the last days in the woods, amounted to eighty-four brace. Hunting was stopped by frost for thirty days, of which twenty were consecutive, beginning on Christmas Day. One day hounds went out experimentally in snow, but it was not a very satisfactory proceeding.

## NOVEMBER, 1887.

*Huntsman*      ...      ...      G. BROWN.

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*1st Whipper-in...*      ...      E. TEECE.

*2nd Whippers-in*      ...      { C. FOX.  
H. ARNOTT.



**November 14th.—**

Having only lately done with Summer, Winter has set in unusually early, and we have had a fair foretaste of it this week. In spite of it the Blackmore Vale Hounds have been out every day without giving me much to record. The ground has been hard and the scent middling, as they found when they met at Fifehead Magdalen, and, having killed two foxes in the morning—a Fifehead one at Ashley's, and an Ashley one at Marnhull—there was not scent enough to kill the afternoon one, who led us over rather a pretty line from Marnhull towards Stalbridge Station, thence alongside the railway towards Landshire Lane, where, at the bridge, they almost had him, but he got away, and, passing Gibbs' Marsh, went to ground on Moore's Farm, where we left him.

**November 15th.—**

There was a largish field at Sparkford. We found in Annis Hills, ran towards the Camel Hill Monument, and headed back, and to

ground near the cover ; but he was soon bolted, to return to earth in the cover. We went on to Podymore Bushes, whence a fox went away up wind, running back to Yeovilton River, where he turned sharp and went for Chilton Cantelo, where we lost him. The run was about three quarters of an hour.

**November 16th.—**

The Master took his pack to Pylle, and, after a fairly long draw, found a fox in the Gazebo Cover, and ran along the hill heading for Wraxall, where he turned and came away just short of the Pennard Covers, and into Cockmel ; and to ground in Park Farm, at Pilton, in thirty-six minutes. The ground was very hard and white, and the joy of riding very doubtful.

**November 17th.—**

The frost was very sharp again, and, therefore, the hunting took the form of a little cub hunting for about two hours or so in Bide's Gorse.

**November 18th.—**

Equally hard was it, and the hounds did not move off till half-past twelve from Lattiford, and then only walked after an outlying fox, who must have reckoned himself pretty safe on such slippery ground, and did not hurry himself, but left us near Derigee.

**November 19th.—**

A kind of thaw followed, and the ground was in fair order, and hunting was again “a joy for ever.” The hounds left Hunters’ Lodge about half-past eleven, and trotted on to Cockrow, where a fox was soon on foot, and, after a turn in cover, went out for Round Hill, and back into Stavordale, thence into the big woods again, and in and out of Cockrow and Pen Forest for some time ; but he changed himself so often for another, and especially when he was tiring, that his reserves seemed inexhaustible, and he and his devices were left there as the sun was setting.

**November 21st.—**

The morning broke foggily, and with a

very white frost, but it was not black at heart, and by half-past eleven had kindly disappeared. From the meet at Pulham we moved on to Holwell Plantation, and a fox went away at once, heading for Glanvilles Wootton, turned right at Buckshaw Brook, and checked there after a ten minutes' gallop. We made a feeble line on for Buckshaw Brake, but in vain, and turned back for Holwell, but just as we emerged one by one out of the narrow, watery lane, the fox jumped up in the grass in front of hounds, who, catching a view at him, raced him over a field or two, then hunted him on to Oschill, and across the water by a handy ford; through Berkeley Gorse, and on by Holnest Park, which they ran over very prettily to Ashtree Copse, on past Cancer Drove, back to Longburton, and out again to Six Acres, where, with a failing scent, hounds were whipped off. As we had been galloping and jumping for two hours and twenty-five minutes we were not reluctant to take our horses home.

**November 22nd.—**

We met at Mudford Bridge, and drew Ashington, where we found a brace, one of which we ran towards Mudford, but soon lost. We found another in Waindles and walked after him in the direction of Great Lyde and Yeovil. Another from Vagg did better. He took us out at the Ashington side of the cover, then turning right he went up by the targets, on behind Vagg Farm, along the road some little way, then heading for Brympton, when scent began to fail; and after that we went slowly on through the Brympton Covers and to West Coker, where he ran us out of what little scent there was.

**November 23rd.—**

At Redlynch. I understand the Master killed a fox in Godmanstone Covers after a short ring, and had another short run from there afterwards. He spent the rest of the brief Winter's day in Cogby Wood.

**November 24th.—**

A small field assembled at Jack White's

Gibbet. A fox was quickly on foot from Lily Wood, and we ran him merrily to the Manor Farm, under Bratton. Here he retired into a drain to recover his wind, but, being quickly bolted, he ran to Dean's Bush, and two fields outside of it he yielded up his brush. Our next find was in Yarlington Wood, whence he ran to the main earths and tried to scratch his way in; but hounds didn't give him the necessary time, and he turned into their mouths, almost, but escaped and ran back down the gully; and, leaving the covers to his right, went away as if for Maperton, and thence ran fast and well over a good hunting country, with fences of every description to amuse and thin out his followers, to 'Tennants' Wood, on as if for Charlton Wood, but, keeping it and Charlton Gorse also on his left, went straight across the valley for Compton Castle, up and down the woods, one turn out and in again, and he had the best of it, for hounds got off the line and could not recover it. This run was about fifty minutes, at a fair hunting pace.

**November 25th.—**

The meet was at Nether Compton, where we found and shortly lost. Another found himself on Stacey's Farm, and took us from there by Lenthay, towards Honeycombe, where the Master had to whip off to avoid the risk of spoiling shooting. Nothing much else was done, though another fox was found in Lenthay.

**November 26th.—**

The Master met at Inwood, and accounted for a brace and-a-half, chiefly hedgerow foxes, one of whom gave a pretty short gallop in the Vale under Templecombe and Yenston, and another from Inwood itself did the same in the afternoon.

**November 28th.—**

The hounds met at Shanks House, but did not find in Cucklington, nor till we got to the Tunnel Head Cover, at Sandley. A fox went away from there, through Bogley, and to the House at Sandley, where a long check saved his life, for though they hit the line off again they could not make much of it, and gave it up near

Buckhorn Weston. We found in, and killed near, Cucklington Wood ; but, while eating him, a "holloa" drew our attention to another, whom we followed down and up the hill again, on for Deeply Withybed, eventually heading for Stoke Trister, where we lost him. The scent was but indifferent.

**November 29th.—**

It was better, and we had a very pretty gallop from West Wood, at Lydford. We ran through Park Wood, on to Foss Wood, and out at the low corner, heading for Alford, hounds running well. The fox bore left away from the river, and ran straight to Wraxall ; here he turned away right-handed, and we galloped our best after him, for forty-four minutes all told, pulling him down in the open at Arthur's Bridge, by Allhampton. After celebrating his obsequies, and giving our horses time to pull themselves together, we re-traced our steps more slowly, and went to Hornblotton Wood, whence a fox took us to Park Wood, where we did nothing more with him, and soon went home.



**December 1st.—**

Bagber Cross Roads brought out a fair field, but there were no foxes in all Hinton, though one lying by Cut Mill took us back to Spar Copse, but only to go to ground and remain there. Our first tenanted cover was Common Plantation, and on the inmate receiving “notice to quit” he went out on the Stalbridge side and ran rather well by Drakes and Jericho, where he turned up to Holtham, and away for the Brickfield, on to Pile Lane, took a turn round the top of Frith, and, leaving Caundle Brake on his right, he swung round up to Frith again. Forty good minutes up to now; and after this he dodged about from Caundle Brake to Doles, down to the village of Purse Caundle almost, in and out of Tripps and Plumley for another hour, calling at Biddlescombe *en route*; and eventually we left him, as the daylight faded.

**December 2nd.—**

Luck attended us also at Pullham. The Master viewed the little red rover away as

hounds were drawing Rooksmoor Drove, and away we went to the sound of the horn, over Charity Gorse, where we turned left and went for Hazelbury, turning left again into Deadmore, on to the Lyddlinch end of it; thence to Bagber Brickyard, right along Puxey Drove, and by the top of Bagber Hill down to Newton Bridge, but not over it, for our fox bore left a little way along the river, and then crossed; his followers finding a fordable place, luckily, and on down to the Mill. The fencing had been frequent and big, and had thinned out the field very considerably, and, but for handy roads, very few would have been with hounds by this time. On we went, after a breathing time here, and into Piddles Wood, a quick turn round and out again to Hyles, towards Whitmore, where he was viewed close in front of hounds, and slowly on to Belchalwell, almost, and back to Piddles Wood, where he went to ground; and there he still may be, for, being out of their country, there could be no digging. The first forty minutes up to the wood was an old-fashioned run, over a fine line of

country, and never before in any December can the ground have ridden so beautifully light.

**December 5th.—**

The meet was at the Carpenter's Arms, at Thorn. We trotted off, punctually at eleven, to Brympton. Found in the Rookery there, and ran to West Coker, and lost. Did not find another in Brympton or Lufton, but as the day was declining hounds spoke to one in Chilthorne Domer, and presently pushed him out; but home was sweet to him, and he came back, not to remain long, however, for they again persuaded him to take country, which he did on the Tintinhull side, and went away, but to ground almost directly on Mr. Hussey's farm. Bolting was no use, for this home-sick animal was no sooner out than he turned to come in again, but was cleverly interrupted by Charley, who, jumping down to block the drain with his legs, actually caught the fox between them by the neck. "Neck or nothing" said the fox, and soon he was nothing.

**December 6th.—**

The meet was at Warrbridge Gate, and we drew on General Sir W. Parke for a fox, who, as usual, had one for us in the wood. He was soon on foot, and ran along the Park to the entrance; thence, slowly, to Common Plantation, whence a “holloa” took us on, and almost to Stalbridge town, and there in a hedge the fox had been seen to go to ground. After a time he was seen to come out, and seen no more. This chase was enough to show there was no scent. Drew Drakes, Holtham, Sterts, and Church Copse, and then Stalbridge Park, where was a fox, or rather foxes; but hounds could do nothing with them, and we left off a little past three o’clock. There was a snow storm in the evening, and some more next morning, and enough on the ground to prevent the hounds throwing off.

**December 8th.—**

The snow was gone, and a mild rain prevailed instead when we met at the Red Lion, at Cheriton. We found in Grove Withybed,

and had a slow wandering kind of run towards Wincanton and Hatherleigh, and back over the railway and to ground near Lattiford. Having dug and eaten him, we found another, and soon killed him near Hatherleigh; and, though another of the family offered to show us some more sport, he effected nothing worth recording.

**December 9th.—**

Found us at Chetnole, but no fox. A long vain draw all the morning. Later on we ran one from Bailey Ridge by Totnel Corner, and then away for Gordon's Gorse, by Home Bushes, and to Ash Tree Common, and on to Holnest Spinnies; turning right into Admiral Digby's plantation, and on between Sweethill and Castles, over the road below Totnel, pointing for Yetminster. Here we bore back right-handed, and swung up to the orchard at Totnel House, where he went to ground, after about an hour's exercise, in a big old hedge, late in the afternoon.

**December 12th.—**

We met at Marston. After drawing Chilton Cantelo and Hinton, we moved on to Waindles, where a fox was at home, and had no wish to leave; eventually hounds forced him out, and we followed them slowly to Ashington Wood, where he took a turn, then broke on the Mudford side, and ran sharply to Waindles again, thence out over the Yeovil Road to the Great Lyde Gully, which he crossed, heading, with a fair scent, for Pen Mill Station. Here he turned sharply to his left, and crossed the River Yeo and the railway, and we hunted him slowly down to Trent Mill and, still more slowly, into the Nether Compton woods, where, after a short turn round, we lost him.

**December 13th.—**

We met at West Hill Cross Roads, long called West Hill Gate, in memory of the departed turnpike. We found in Honeycombe, and ran along the hill and lost in Thornford Firs. Drew back through Honeycombe and into Sherborne Park; found our fox on the

wall of North Wootton Cover, and ran rather prettily along the Park and Lovers' Grove, down to the bottom of Honeycombe, and back again, and so on. It was not a brilliant day, nor very fine, as it was blowing half a gale and raining all day.

**December 15th.—**

From Horsington House, a largish field followed hounds to Hull Gully, whence they all followed a fox up wind to Cheriton Wood, and thence down wind towards the Templecombe Woods, and lost. Up and down wind seemed to make no difference to the scent, which was wanting. Drew two Templecombe woods and Cheriton Wood, all blank. Found and chopped one in Maperton Gorse. Drew Stowell Wood and the New Plantation also blank, but found one in Charlton Gorse; a cold line thence to Charlton Wood, but could make nothing of it. A very poor day's sport.

**December 16th.—**

Found us at Barnes Cross Roads. Ran

through the little withybed above Holwell and on to Holwell Gorse, where a fox was soon on foot, and soon out, too. We ran through Ponting's Gorse, over the river by the Mill, by Charity Gorse, into Rooksmoor, out at the Lydlinch end of it ; thence to the river under Stock Covers, coasted it for a few fields, then crossed it, and went through the spinnies and Brickhill Cover, and bore left down the road towards Lydlinch Rectory, then alongside the road to Woodbridge ; here, bearing left again, ran very nearly up to Holwell Church. A sharp turn back took us nearly to Woodbridge again, and he was marked to ground in a little over an hour from the find. It was very pretty hunting, and some of it fast, but the scent, though fair, was not holding. Leaving Charley to dig, we went back to Holwell Gorse and found a fox, who pretty nearly copied the line of his predecessor ; but the storms about had not improved the scent, and the fox had it pretty much his own way, as he led us from Ponting's Gorse to the Mill, over the river by Charity Gorse to Rooksmoor Drove and Cover, and out,



heading for Bagber, somewhere near which he ran us out of scent ; and, a second hour or rather more, proving enough for all, home was the word.

**December 19th.—**

The meet was at Mr. Mildmay's house at Hazlegrove, and, after running hounds through the little spinnies round the Park, they were put into Yarcombe, and soon a whimper raised our hopes for another good run from that generally fortunate cover. But to-day the fox was not so minded ; he came out on the wrong side, and went the wrong way, running only to Queen Camel Quarry and back. Hounds, then, drawing for an outlying fox on the way, went on towards Wearyall, whence a fox of the same unpatriotic character only ran to the Withybed and back, and out again and to ground near Galhampton Gully. We were then "holloaed" to another fox, whom we ran for about twenty minutes fairly well, till he, too, retired to ground in an orchard close to Castle Cary. He was dug and eaten in declining daylight. A cold showery day, but with a fair scent at times.

**December 20th.—**

We met at Holnest Pound, and a very cold frosty morning it was. We drew Butterwick, Willow Tree Copse, Broke, and its spinnies and gorses without the ghost of a gallop to warm us. Longburton Gorse, however, was better provided, and the fox crossed the road into Holnest, in the direction of Six Acres. So did hounds, but from a total want of scent one did not seem to have much to do with the other. After some speculative hunting we went on to Leweston. Found there and walked about after various "holloas" to the wood towards Whitfield, then back to Knighton Gorse, and towards Honeycombe; back to Lillington, and in Leweston we left him with brush, pads, and mask in his own possession.

**December 22nd.—**

A very large field responded to General Sir William and Lady Parke's invitation to breakfast at Thornhill, where a hospitable greeting and a handsome dinner table made every one feel welcome. All the neighbouring

Hunts, as well as our own, were strongly represented. Nor did the General's care for us cease there, for, after running through the Rookery and wood, a fox flung himself at the hounds' heads as we were going on to the next covert, and gave us a rattling chase, in view, for a few minutes by Cuckoo Pound, heading for Mount Pleasant; he then availed himself of the opportunity, and left us somewhat behind him as he went on by Jericho for Warrbridge, where he left us altogether. We chopped, unluckily, one of his relations in Stalbridge Common Plantation; and had an afternoon run from Bagber Gorse, over the Green Drove, round by the Schools towards Bagber Cross Roads, by Queen Copse, over the stream, as if for Sturminster, back again, and lost.

**December 23rd.—**

A very cold day, followed by a sharp frost at night, which made the meet at Compton Castle doubtful. However, the hounds arrived by eleven, as usual, the Master soon after, and

at twelve o'clock they drew the Laurels, without, however, finding there, or in Sigwells. A fox was killed as soon as found on Littleton Hill. Another was found in the Cadbury Laurels, who soon went to ground, and, having skated about at the risk of our necks quite long enough, we were glad to be allowed to go home with unbroken bones. Amongst those present were Mr. Merthyr and Lady Theodora Guest, Hon. E. Portman, Mr. and Mrs. Learmouth, Mr. Dendy, Captain Bridges, Mr. Mansel-Pleydell, Major Chapman, Mr. L. C. Liddell, Captain Bennett, Mr. Luff, Mr. and Miss Serrell, Mr. and Mrs. Swayne, Mr. G. Allen, Mr. C. Moss, and Mr. S. Lyne.

**December 26th.—**

Mr. Jack Frost has had it all his own way since Monday, on which day the meet was at Marston, and we found in Marston Cover and Corton Gorse, but no particular sport followed, as the ground was already hard and contained but little scent. We can but watch for a thaw, and meantime be





MERTON GUEST, Esq., M.P., on *Prepuce*,  
GOING HOME.

thankful for the rest afforded to hounds, horses, and men, who have been hard at work every day since August.

**January 2nd, 1888.—**

Though thawing, there was still too much frost in the ground for hunting to be possible, but on

**January 3rd.—**

After exactly a week of enforced idleness, these hounds resumed work and met at Stockbridge. We went straight to Whitfield, found, ran out half-way to Yetminster and back to the cover, up and down both Whitfields, out by Leweston Withybed, to Knighton Gorse and back, the going being most dangerous from the bone in the ground—out of regard to our own bones we kept to Macadam. The fox repeated the operations above described, eventually turning up over Conway's Gorse, heading for Tipples, but turned once too often for his own safety, and hounds ran into him at the foot of Knighton

Gorse, and terminated the day's proceedings with a kill.

**January 5th.—**

A good company met at Lattiford House, and, as fine mild weather had succeeded the frost, everybody was on the ride. Grove Withybed was the first draw, and, for a wonder, was drawn blank, but the reason was explained when, two fields outside it, hounds eagerly picked up the line of the "stole-away" fox ; slowly at first they worked it, along two hedgerows, but then, flinging their tongues, they began racing over the green lane, on to Ash Tree Copse, and shot out again over the road, heading for Rodgrove. But here he must have been headed, for he suddenly bore sharp left-handed, crossing the road again and the Cale River, and thence, bearing due north, on we went to Horwood, past Snagg Farm, leaving Stoke Trister on the right, and away for Hunters' Lodge; but, leaving that, too, on the right, we bent left-handed and over the hill to Charlton Musgrove Copse, and here he



went to ground. Time, twenty-four minutes ; distance, about four miles. This was a very pretty, fast, gallop, and some horses had pretty well had enough. The fox had, too, for this turn ; but as we couldn't get him out, he may repeat the performance, which was very creditable to him, another day. From here we went to Elscombe, another of Mr. Dendy's covers, and, of course, found at once. We ran a loop round the cover, and back to it ; out again, pointing first for Lattiford, then for Maperton, and then bore left, finally crossing the road by the Old Windmill Inn, and went to ground under a trip by Gale's Plantation. This run occupied about forty-five minutes ; dug, ate, and went home in a lovely evening.

**January 6th.—**

We met at Haydon Lodge. Drew through some of the covers, and found in Snagg's Harbour ; ran to Alweston, and doubled back, then over Windmill Hill, and took the road to Purse Caundle. Ran hard along it for

about two miles nearly to that village ; here our fox turned, as if for Plumley, but ran along under it to Frith, out and on round Caundle Brake, back to Frith, where we killed him in something over forty seconds. We found another in Goat Hill, ran him out to Mews Hill, along the Purse Caundle Lane, across to Crendles, down towards Milborne Port, but a “holloa” took us up the hill again ; ran on to Bowden Gorses and Bowden Lane, as if for Inwood, but turned away for Toomer and Purse Caundle Gorse ; made a line towards Spurles, and lost him. There was rain coming, and the scent, which was good in the morning, failed as the afternoon drew on.

**January 9th.—**

I might sum up my record of this week's proceedings in one word—Fog—as certainly little else was seen for five days out of six. It influenced everything, and when the hounds met at Alford, they could do next to nothing on account of it. After some hesitation, hounds were thrown into the Alford Covers ; a fox was

soon on foot, and hounds after it. They were quickly out of sight, and were stopped after the first check ; a long wait near Hornblotton Wood, the fog getting denser the while, ended in the word for home.

**January 10th.**

The fog was nearly as bad ; but from West Hill Gate (or Cross Roads, as it is now advertised), we drew Honeycombe, and ran along that cover and Thornford, over the river, to Nether Compton, where we lost. This was all slow hunting. We had another run in the afternoon ; hounds finding their fox in Crackmore and thence by Hanover, Purse Caundle, and Bowden, ending, I believe, near Martin's Wood. But by this time everybody had lost hounds and each other, and the country was dotted over with solitary sportsmen, some asking where hounds were, others their way home.

**January 12th.—**

The fog was still supreme. The meet to-day was at Middenmarsh, and it was voted

a little clearer, though it was almost a case of the wish being father to the thought. After finding in Middlemarsh Common and losing near Butterwick, another fox was pushed out of Longburton Gorse; he went over the road and returned to the gorse, making his way there to Six Acres, round it, away over Cancer Drove for Stockbridge, and by Longburton Common to Broke; then by Folke Withybed, on, leaving Fontleroi on his right, and he was pulled down in a small spinney under the Holts in thirty-three minutes from the find. This was a pretty gallop for the few who could see it, but those who were not close to hounds had no chance in the fog. One gentleman in the Artillery had the misfortune to dislocate his arm in the course of the run.

**January 13th. —**

At Pulham things looked slightly better, as we could see into the second field. From Pulham we trotted straight to Shortwood, whence a fox, after hanging some time in cover, went away, rather well at first, by

Bewley Wood, and Duntische Common, to Castle Hill. The fencing was severe, the pace good, and the field were soon scattered. We next drew Humber Wood, and ran, not fast, to Melcombe Park, at the far end of which a perfect wall of fog faced us, and hounds were whipped off and sent home.

The following extracts are taken from a capital article which appeared in *The Field*, and, being of historic interest, may be inserted here: —“Time flies quickly ; but I find it is many years ago since I took a tour through the good county of Dorset, and I can recollect seeing a great deal that very much impressed me concerning this sporting quarter. It is a land of old county families and 'squires of high degree, and they learnt their fox-hunting from such great masters of the craft as Mr. Farquharson and the Rev. H. F. Yeatman, of Stock House. Thus it occurred to me, at a fashionable Blackmore Vale meet I once had the pleasure of witnessing, that the field was composed, as it should be, of a great many landowners, a great

many farmers, and a few visitors, but at the same time it looked a Leicestershire sort of gathering. There was quite a crowd of very well-mounted gentlemen as the road in the coppice was pushed through on the signal that Reynard had gone away, and a bird's-eye view of the start showed the hard-riding division getting clear in a body, and others taking to a line of white gates, after the fashion of the Midlands. I was there on a visit of enquiry, and subsequently heard from poor old Jack Press who this and that person was. And how many have gone over to the majority in these few years—Jack Press amongst them, and the amiable baronet with whom I chatted the whole of one evening in the coffee-room of the Digby, besides the dashing young officer, who, I was told, rode straighter than any one, and who met his doom in a polo match in India. Well do I remember trotting on to covert with a gentleman in black, who expressed himself extremely well pleased with things as they were at that moment, as a run, he said, was a certainty every day with these Vale Hounds.

‘But it will not last, you know,’ was the next suggestion, ‘as new generations of landowners will arise, and farmers will get mixed up and altered.’ I can scarcely say whether some of this prophesying has been realised in eighteen years, or whether there are any indications that it will be so, but most certainly the outward signs are that the Blackmore Vale Hunt has prospered, and that it is still favoured by the same happy conditions.

“Dorsetshire has been a wonderful country for what may be termed the capacities of hunting, as both Mr. Farquharson and Mr. Drax could never believe they had country enough; and that they begrudged giving up any is very well known. This was the existing state of things between fifty and sixty years ago, when Mr. Drax had succeeded Mr. Yeatman as the Master of the B.V., and Mr. Grove hunted the Cranborne Chase country; but, like Mr. Noel’s Leicestershire country, it was subsequently seen that each Master had considerably too much, and there was enough for six packs to hunt, each on an average four days a week. The Blackmore Vale in Mr.

Digby's time very rarely hunted on the Taunton side of their country, and Sir Richard Glyn surrendered it, for a time, at any rate, to Mr. Lionel Patten, when that gentleman established the present Taunton Vale. Quite a new era was opened for the Blackmore Vale when Mr. Digby came upon the scene, as that large-hearted sportsman, as Mr. Wingfield, had been a very straight rider in Leicestershire, and when the magnificent estates of his kinsmen came in course of time to his share, he thought the proper line for an English gentleman was to live on his own acres and to do good amongst his neighbours.

“The Vale of Blackmore was second to none as a scent-carrying country; hounds could race, and fairly revel on the line of a straight-necked one, as had been proved often enough in Mr. Yeatman's time, when some of the earliest hunting runs written showed the style of doing things sixty years ago. In one account I have seen, they found at Inwood, the seat of the present Master, and ran over Toomer Farm to Stalbridge Park,



which they traversed at a racing pace. Topping the Park wall, and sinking the extensive Vale beneath, then ran at an inconceivable pace (so says the chronicler) over Henstridge Marsh, nearly up to Fifehead Magdalen, crossing the turnpike at Five Bridges, and, dashing into the River Cale, went away for the wide inclosures of Nyland to West Stour, and then to Bugley Copse, Cucklington, Silton, and into the parish of Gillingham, when the hounds ran from scent to view, and rolled him over, the distance being sixteen miles without a check, in one hour and fifteen minutes. Leicestershire could not beat this, and the Vale runs have been of very common occurrence, many sportsmen being alive now who can remember them in Mr. Drax's time, and that gentleman was the Master of the Blackmore Vale in the early years of the forties. It was easy then to gather that Mr. Digby thought that he could make a Melton of Sherborne, and so he built the Digby Hotel, put up the white hunting gates, and formed an establishment

second to none as regards the pack of hounds, the best he could get together, and horses purchased regardless of expense. He only kept them a few seasons, his Huntsmen being Turner during the first part of his reign, and Jack Press, from the Cambridgeshire, to finish with, and that worthy went over with the pack when Mr. Digby presented it to Sir Richard Glyn; he also gave him the horses on the understanding that, as they were done with, they were to be shot. Sir Richard Glyn was more of a houndsman than Mr. Digby, and with material such as he found—and it was all from the best of sources—he went heart and soul into high breeding, and no one was keener, as has been often evinced at the hound shows. Sir Richard was quite a model Master, as he set the example of fine riding, but he would never allow any liberties to be taken; and I recollect old Press's opinion, given in his gruff style, that theirs was the hardest riding Hunt in England, and under the best command. They never bothered him, or pressed too close on hounds. Sir Richard took care of that.

“It was Jack Press, or old John Howe, of Henstridge Ash, who recounted to me the history of the Blackmore Vale, Howe being at that time eighty years old, and he had followed the Blackmore Vale the best part of his life. It appears that Mr. Yeatman\* started the country as the B.V. in 1826, his Huntsman being John Channings, and Joe Mitchel, one of the hardest riders of the day, was his Whip. Mr. Yeatman went through enormous difficulties in the establishment of a hunting community here. He was succeeded by Mr. Hall; but when he retired in favour of Lord Portman, the B.V. Hounds were in high repute. Kit Atkinson was Lord Portman’s Huntsman, Channings having died in Mr. Yeatman’s service, and capital sport was shown in this second decade of the Hunt, which lasted seven years. Mr. Drax, of Charborough Park, succeeded Lord Portman, and his Huntsman was John Last; but after a few seasons Mr. Drax retired, and sold the hounds in 1853 to Mr. Whieldon, Major Stanley, and Lord Dungarvon,† their Huntsman being Harry Honey. Lord Henry Thynne had the country for

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\* Died 1861.

† The present Earl of Cork.

one season, and in 1858 came Mr. Digby, who, as I have above remarked, determined to make the country a second Melton. Both Howe and John Press have gone their long journey since they gossiped about these statistics to me, and Press had a sad ending to his life, as, after receiving a good testimonial from the Hunt, and retiring, his mind became impaired—though prior to this, I hear, he used to wander about dissatisfied with life without hunting. How many would be the same? We sigh for rest sometimes, but without our daily avocations, what are we? All things come to an end, and although Sir Richard Glyn engaged Orbell to succeed Press, and held the reins of government for a few more seasons, he made up his mind to resign in 1884, after a most successful Mastership, as much of the prestige of the Blackmore Vale was due to Sir Richard Glyn. A most liberal successor was found for the country in Mr. Merthyr Guest, who from the very outset of his career as M.F.H. has been doing a great deal more than he promised to do. On paper the B.V. is a four-days-a-week pack, and this is all the country

can expect by tradition or custom ; but Mr. Guest has practically made it a six-days-a-week country, as he hunts four days according to his guarantee, and twice a week he hunts his own private pack, keeping thirty-one couples for this generous departure from regulations, and he carries out the whole at his own expense. The wisdom of the course has been seen, as a country cannot be too well hunted, and foxes, being better preserved, are more plentiful than ever.

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“To be able to hunt six days a week, with an average of five meets at easy distance, is not to be despised, with a run over grass pretty nearly certain every day. Mr. Merthyr Guest is most appropriately at the head of this grand Hunt, as he has hunted here from boyhood, knows every one, and every inch of the country. His consort, Lady Theodora Guest, should also be considered the first lady of the country in the cause of fox-hunting, as her ladyship originated the Hunt Servants' Benefit Society, the subject being first broached through

a letter from her to *The Field*, supplemented by more substantial proofs of goodwill.

“Mr. Guest hunts his own pack himself twice a week, and I regret that I had to select a day for a visit to the kennel when that gentleman had to be on field duty with seventeen and a half couples, especially as he had given me a most kind invitation to see the hounds so far back as Peterborough Show. However, to see a six-days-a-week pack in its entirety is impossible during the season, excepting on Sundays, and I expect that would not do. I saw, though, more than I expected to find, as the number of hounds make a roll-call of nearly a third more than Sir Richard Glyn kept. Then the kennel list Jack Press handed to me included fifty-six and a half couples, as now the one before me can boast of eighty-three and a half couples, or, I should say, the biggest lot of hounds in England. To accommodate such a number Mr. Merthyr Guest has gone to considerable expense in the enlargement of the kennels at Charlton Horethorne, a new set on one side being noticeable, with boiling houses and

everything complete; and Jack Press' larder, which he was so proud of, has been removed and made larger, with the advantage of a slaughtering yard and odd places for puppies. A new lot of puppy kennels has also been erected, and there is ample room for more hounds still, but another day's hunting cannot be edged in.

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“This is a pack of hounds the Blackmore Vale country may be proud of, and that such an appreciation is felt is proved by the fact that over sixty couples of puppies are walked in a season. If sport was moderate in this quarter last year—and it was so nearly everywhere else—there has been an abundance to make up for it this season, Brown and his First Whip (Teece) telling me that they have had good runs most days, and some very quick things in the Vale. Mr. Farquharson's neighbouring Hunt used to be spoken of as the “white collars,” and Mr. Merthyr Guest has established a distinguishing feature for his men, as they are all mounted on grey horses. I saw the Hunt stud of five-and-twenty

workmanlike-looking greys, a sight such as I had never seen before; but the example is catching, I hear, as the Dorsetshire farmers are now trying to breed greys."

To return to the Diary, on  
**January 16th.**—

The meet was at Mudford Bridge, and a fox was found at Mr. Phelps' little spinney close to Mudford; and heartily we all wished the late Mr. Bryan Phelps had been alive to see his ambition realised, for it had long been the desire of that excellent sportsman and good man to see a find in his own little cover. His fox went away for Ashington, but the scent, good at first, was not holding, and, after twisting about Ashington Wood a little, we could do no more with him. Various other covers were drawn blank, and after much questioning as to whether or not we should hunt next day, we parted to ride home in a frosty air, doubtful whether we should meet or not at Clifton Wood the following morning.



**January 17th.—**

This, however, we did, in a bitter south-east wind. A fox found in Clifton Wood thought it too cold to stay there, and led us a long dance over a rough country by Halstock towards Coker Wood, and to ground in a bank. We found his successor in Caswell Gorse; he ran as if for a big gully leading to Melbury, but, turning right, he went into the heart of Coker Wood, and nearly through it. Breaking cover at last, he ran sharply back to Sutton Bingham, and was nearly caught by the hounds at the Railway Station. Making good his escape thence, he crossed the water and ran back by Frankham Farm to Clifton Wood, where he ran a ring close in front of hounds. But he was too clever for us, and, after a run of about two hours in severe and freezing country, including the fording of two brooks, where a cold bath would have been an icy business, we had to leave him, and rode back home in a frost which entirely stopped hunting for the next three or four days.

**January 23rd.—**

The meet was at Sparkford Inn, and, after the frost of last week, every one was glad to be out again, and a large field followed the hounds, as they trotted straight off to Babcary Thorns, and drew it blank. We came back to Annis Hills, where a fox was soon on foot; after a turn round the cover he went away, heading for Hazelgrove, and, swinging left under the Monument, went on till we were over the brook—such of us, at least, as did get over—heading for Babcary; here he turned back short left and ran along the side of the brook some little way, till he crossed it again, and turned to the left, making his way to Annis Hills. After a little hesitation hounds came out again on his line, and worked it carefully towards Babcary Thorns, where he must have been waiting for us, for they ran into him just outside it. We next found a brace in Podymore Bushes, ran rather well in crescent-shaped line to Annis Hills, in twelve minutes; here they played at hide-and-seek for some time, eventually

losing him outside the cover. The afternoon was advanced, so no more was done.

**January 24th.—**

From Red Post, Poyntington, there was great slaughter. We found two foxes in Hack Hill, running first one and then the other to ground; when, while looking at the retreat chosen by the latter, a misguided fox came running down the hill right into the pack, who did not scruple to make mince-meat of him. We killed a second, who found himself in Holway, and then went to the Wheatsheaf Gorse, and was chopped; found another there, who gave us a pretty gallop over Poyntington Downs to the Slaites,\* then they ran well to the Wheatsheaf Wood and back to the Cleeves, where we had a check; recovering the line, they ran him over Corton Hill, and down it towards Marston Cover, which he left on his right, and, running along the slope of the hill, went to ground, after a run of over an hour and a quarter, in Stafford Green Gully.

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\* Sometimes "Slates."

**January 26th. —**

We met at Chetnole, and, owing to a severe chill, the Master was unfortunately absent. Brown, however, had his orders, and trotted off to Briar's Wood, where he found at once, and ran to Drive End, and to ground. Drew Caswell Gorse blank, but found directly in Jericho; he went away for Briar's Wood, Lord Ilchester's Gorse, and lost, heading for Melbury. This did not take much over twenty minutes. We then drew a few more covers without success, finding a tenant, however, in Common Plantation, who took us a short turn to Hendover Hill, where we had to leave him. There was but little scent to-day.

**January 27th. —**

From the Green Man, we had a regular Pulham Day; and again had the disappointment of hearing the Master was not well enough to be out. A fox was found directly in Rooksmoor; he ran over the Common, up over the hill by Cockrow, on to Hazelbury, to the left of Hazelbury Church, pointing for

Stoke Wake, thence by Locketts, through Woolland Wood, and into the Warren, where he was killed. A very pretty gallop of sixty-three minutes. We next found in Puxey Copse, and ran by Haydon Gorse and Fifehead Common to Rooksmoor, turned, and ran up to, and close past, Mr. Connop's house; and went straight on for Plumber Copse, bearing to the right through Andrews' Gorse, heading for Whitmore, one of Mr. Portman's covers. Leaving this cover two fields to his right, he set his mark for Belchalwell and Okeford Fitzpaine, and, at the end of an hour and a quarter, left the Vale and went for the hills, thinning the field out considerably. Once on the hills he ran through Turnworth Wood, and into Houghton Wood; running the length of this enormous cover and half-way back, he finally left it for Stickland Wood, going as if for Milton Abbey, but turned back at the Park wall, as if determined to try again for refuge in the big woods. Brown here wisely stopped hounds, as they had now been running over two hours, well into their neighbours' country;

they were miles and miles from home, and it was four o'clock in a Winter's afternoon. No doubt the Huntsman was disappointed at not handling his fox, but there were not many left to share his sorrow, as the field had dropped off by degrees, and few had dared to face the hills at all.

**February 6th.—**

I had nothing to record of last week, from frost having held sway throughout the whole of it; this week, however, hounds have been out every day, with the fluctuating fortunes which I will now give in detail, beginning with an indifferent day from Lydford. A long journey to cover was rewarded by drawing all the Lydford Covers blank, Foss Wood, Hornblotton, and Park Wood, &c., till hounds hit a line near Naydens, into which they took it, and out, heading for Farringdon, and soon lost. It was but a weak line at best, and not a good scenting day, though fine and mild. Our next draw was Wearyall, where we found, and hounds ran up to North Cadbury, where

their fox went to ground. Not much more was done, but better fortune awaited those who met next day.

**February 7th.—**

We met to-day at Holnest Pound, and, after running the hounds through a few covers near the meet, as a kind of preliminary canter, business began with a fox in Sweethills Common, who led us a real chase over a country so replete with fences and obstacles of all kinds and characters as to satisfy the most greedy. From Sweethills he set his mask for Castles, then to Totnel and Bailey Ridge; here he bore left, and into Sweethills and up and down those gorses, back to Home Bushes, and out, heading for Whitfield; then out, and again he bore away for his native common. He could not stay there, however, as he evidently wished to do, but was pressed out, and obliged again to face the open in the direction of Castles and Furzy Field, and on to Sceviors. Here he bore left, and went by the corner of Common Plantation and Paper

Hill Copse, and once more by Castles to Sweethills, backwards and forwards again, extending his tour this time so as to take in Leweston, through the Rookery there, and to Honeycombe, along it to Thornford Firs; and down again from the top of the Ridge to Whitfield, where, after having been running for some three hours, hounds were finally stopped. If that was the same fox throughout he must be giddy still. Horses were not sorry to turn homewards by that time, but it was a fine day's work, over a most sporting country.

**February 9th.—**

Another good day was before us, and we had hardly recovered our exertions of the 7th, before putting in an appearance at the other end of the world—at any rate, of the B.V. world—at Zeal's Green. Our hopes had been raised by a report of many foxes here, but as cover after cover was drawn blank—Norwood and all the spinnies round the house, and Bagmore—we began to get anxious, as it was not till hounds



were half through the last cover, Silton Wood, that we heard so much as a whimper. However, there our fox was, and, reluctantly leaving home, he broke at last, and headed northward, but, bending round right-handed, he ran fast and well for Huntingford, where by a handy bridge we crossed the Shreenwater; turning a little to the right, he bore down past Forest side, straight for Eddix Hill to Bowridge Hill, where he altered his mind, and, turning round right-handed, he re-traced his steps, and, taking a line on the east of his previous one, he went back almost straight to Silton Wood again, getting back in sixty-three minutes from the start. Here, practically, we lost him, though Brown worked out a weak line in vain pursuit of him in the direction of Eddix Hill again. We then drew Whistley Wood and Bailey Bottom blank, and so home.

**February 10th.—**

The popular meet, Five Bridges, was fairly attended, but the day's sport could not compare with yesterday's. Foxes were numerous at

Fifehead, and one we found in the lower Withybed, our first draw, led us up through the other Fifehead Covers and down again; and very prettily hounds then ran the short but sweet distance to Nyland, where, after a turn or two round the covers, the fox paid the penalty, which, sooner or later, is paid by most foxes. The day's sport was, however, over, for though we drew Sandley and Langham, and some other covers and hedgerows in the neighbourhood of the meet, we could not move another fox, and we moved on homewards, moralising on the hard ground, want of rain, lowness of springs, and emptiness of the brooks and ponds. "February Fill Dyke" has all his work cut out.

**February 13th.—**

The meet was at Sparkford, and the fox was at home at Yarcombe. He gave us a short run; another, from Annis Hills, gave us forty minutes in the direction of Charlton Adam, near which we lost him. Further proceedings were interrupted by a severe

snowstorm, which, continuing through Tuesday, kept hounds in kennel for a long time.

**March 6th.—**

After exactly three weeks to a day of enforced idleness, these hounds resumed work at Bagber Cross Roads. A small field, three in number, had assembled when the hounds arrived, but this soon increased to about a dozen or twenty, and, after some slight hesitation on account of the still doubtful state of the ground, the Master decided to throw the pack into Sir Richard's Gorse, at Bagber. Never was a quicker find, and away went a good fox, pointing first for Lydlinch, but, bearing left, we all followed the hounds, who ran as if tied to the line, and, our first gate being barred by a snow wreath, and fencing a necessity, caution was soon thrown to the winds; and we galloped on to Sturminster Newton Bridge, by which some lucky riders crossed the river, others fording it by a rather awkward ford; thence he went for Plumber, and a very slight pause opposite Mr. Connop's

house was the only semblance of a check we had. On we went to Whitmore, and out, without dwelling there at all, past Belchalwell Church, and, leaving Ibberton behind him, our fox tried to rise the hill, but half-way up hounds ran into him, and finished his career in thirty-seven minutes. So we had begun well. We then left Mr. Portman's country, and, working back to our own, found a fox in Badbury and ran him to Puxey, and there he gave us the slip. Our next find was in Prior's Down. We ran this fox towards Common Plantation, Stalbridge Station, and back to Prior's Down, and, in short, ran a slow ringing run for about two hours over that fine country, ending by whipping off at Five Bridges, after a long day.

**March 8th.—**

The meet was at Jack White's Gibbet, but it didn't bring us much luck, for, though we found a fox in Hadspen, we lost him directly, and our quarry was not at home in Lily Wood or Holbrook. We found in Yarlington, but

could make nothing of it. We next found in Elscombe, and here hounds got away with nobody with them, and ran for Lattiford, as though to seek Mr. Dendy, who was shut up with a cold. Not seeing him out, the fox bore left for Cheriton, and then right to Holton, where he went to ground. We found another in Elscombe, but scent was bad on the plough, and we left him making his way to Dene's Bush, while we went home.

**March 9th.**—

We met at Stockbridge, and went to Whitfield, where we instantly found a fox, who took us over the Brook to Lillington, up the hill to Thornford Firs, and along to Beerhacket Hill, out towards Tipples, and lost. We went back to Whitfield, found, and ran rather well to the other Whitfield Covers, on, over Knighton Gorse, over the hill to Lillington village, where he turned back right-handed to Lillington Wood and into Leweston Park; then took the line through Leweston Withybed to Whitfield again; out, heading for Yetminster,

but, turning sharp back, walked slowly into Knighton Gorse, and lost. This was a ringing run, and a difficult one to describe; but it occupied about sixty minutes, afforded a pleasant gallop, and the opportunity of a cold bath to a horse, though the rider preferred to remain high and dry on the saddle. Home Bushes and the Stockbridge covers were drawn, but the day's sport was over. The country rode well, but not as deep as one should have expected after so much snow, and it will take a good deal more rain to complete the supply which science has calculated we shall require for a Summer's demand.

**March 12th.—**

We met at Marston Inn, and Podymore Bushes the first draw. We found there, and the fox took us over the moor, and then, turning left, went straight for Chilton Cantelo, crossed the river at Hinton, heading for Ashington, where we lost. We drew three covers, including Chilthorne Domer, with no success, but did better at Limington Spinney,

for we took a good fox away from there, who ran hard through Ashington Wood and on to Waindles, through this cover, right down to Yeovil, where he took refuge in a building, but was not hospitably received, for while we were casting round he was brought out to us in a sack, and his end was as usual, and Mr. Marsh retains all that remains of him—his brush. The run occupied some forty-five minutes, and the scent was good in the afternoon, in spite of a strong wind.

**March 13th.—**

Five Bridges called forth a large field, and a real rough day we had — blowing, snowing, sleeting, and raining all day long. We spent an hour at Nyland trying to persuade a stay-at-home fox to show us a little sport, which he resolutely declined doing; it may have been owing to the weather outside, but these tactics seemed common to all foxes, the Fifehead ones behaving in the same way. After remaining there some time Brown went to a “holloa” on the Kington side, and we

followed a line slowly over the Sherborne Road, back to Nyland, where this fox remained with his like-minded brethren. We trotted on to Lady Theodora's Gorse, found, and went away at once, galloping along the South Western Railway, past Yenston, almost to Templecombe, but turned up left-handed just short of it, checked, but worked a line slowly on towards Martin's Wood, and lost in thick snow.

**March 15th.—**

The snow had ceased in the night, and to-day, though cold, was fine. The representatives of many Hunts put in an appearance at Zeals Green, but were at first disappointed, as there was not a single fox in all Zeals. We found later on in Penn Pits, raced into Stourton, and killed by the lake. We found again in Cucklington Wood, ran a twisting line to Deptly, slowly to Penn Forest, where matters improved, and we ran nicely out of the cover, heading for Stavordale Priory, past the pond, and on for Stavordale Wood, but, turning short to the right, he ran up to



Cockrow, where scent failed, hounds divided, and the foxes had the best of it.

**March 16th.—**

We met at Barnes Cross Roads. The necessary animal was wanting in the little covers close to the meet, but we found him in Holwell Gorse. He led us a ring towards Castle Hill, but returned to the Gorse in a short half-hour, and was left there. No one at home in Short Wood, but from Humber Wood we did better. Our fox broke on the south-west side and made for the New Inn, but doubled back for Pulham Mill; thence making his way to Short Wood, and returning by a sort of ring to Ranksborough Gorse, and went down to the river, which we crossed, heading for Hazlebury Bryan; but we soon swung back, and into Charity Gorse, up Rooksmoor Drove, past King's Stag, towards Humber Wood. Up to this point it was about an hour and ten minutes from the find. He was now running us out of scent, but we made a line into Short Wood, and could do no more. A very cold

east-windy day, with snow flakes fluttering about in the early morning, and threatening more.

**March 19th.—**

A hard black frost and a strong north-east wind greeted us at Sparkford Inn; and a shocking scent, which quite prevented anything like sport from Annis Hills, where we found foxes and could not run them, ought to have prepared our minds for the fall of snow which followed in the night, and kept hounds in kennel.

**March 22nd.—**

The weather having quite recovered, a large field met at the Red Lion, Cheriton; and a little mild rain in the course of the day made everybody imagine, for the twentieth time this year, that Winter was over. A fox was “holloaed” away from Grove Withybed almost before we got there, and we went off merrily, hoping for a real run. After a few fields, however, we saw that it was no good, and by the time we got to the brook—heading

for Stoke Trister—he had run us entirely out of scent, in about twenty minutes. Rodgrove, Ash Tree Copse, Makin Hill, and Holbrook were alike blank, also some hedgerows; but we found directly in Elscombe, and ran smartly to Yarlington, and the burst of music down the hill was refreshing; but on the cold ground above scent faded away, and we did but little more.

**March 23rd.—**

From Pulham we had a long day; hounds were run through Rooksmoor Drove, and then trotted to Brickells, which, as usual, produced a fox, who ran by Lydlinch Common, through Chicksmead, and into the cover again. A “holloa” took us out towards Lanes, then, having got on the line, we ran it back over the water to Stock, by Woodbridge Withybed, back through Brickells to Lydlinch again, finally losing near Bere Copse. Our next fox was found in New Gorse; he took a line past the Green Man, on past Farmer Ponting’s, turning left there, and, heading for Humber

Wood, left it on his right, crossing the brooks for Hazlebury, but bore back left-handed, and then veered in a twisting course for Shortwood and Castle Hill, past Pulham Rectory, to Brockhampton Copse, where he took a sharp ring round, and then went straight over the road to Rue, and away for Alton, where, after a good gallop of an hour and thirty-five minutes, our fox made his case good and left us; part of this was fast and part of it very slow hunting, and it was no doubt owing to the cold rain which was threatening that scent faded in the evening. We have not done with Winter yet, for on Saturday evening there was sleet and snow after the sun set.

**March 26th.—**

Winter still surrounds us, and a fall of snow helped to account for a want of scent through the day. The meet was at Sparkford. We found a fox in Wearyall and killed him all too quickly. The neighbouring covers not supplying another, we went on to Littleton Hill, and ran a fox out through Compton to

the fields above Sigwells. Here he bore left and ran to and through Bristol Gorse, thence towards Compton Castle covers; he came out of them and ran a ring over the ploughs towards Blackford, returning to the lodge of Compton, where he mysteriously disappeared. After this we trotted home in the sleet, which ended a little later in snow.

**March 27th.—**

The ground being white, the Master allowed a little time for the snow to thaw, and it was not till half-past eleven that a largish field left Fontleroi and proceeded to see Ferney Down drawn blank, and several other covers also — Snagg's Harbour, Folke Withybed, Buckshaw Brake amongst them—the foxes seeming to have melted away with the snow. In Lanes, however, we found, but hounds were soon whipped off that one and taken to the Holts, where another was quickly found, and as quickly marked to ground, and left there. A third was soon on foot, and hounds ran it round the covers, down Rowditches, and out,

heading for Caundle Marsh Brickfields; then up the hill towards Tripps, to Deadman's Copse, and away by Mews Hill and Hanover, all the length of the wood and half-way back, then out on the ploughs to Plumley, and through it, losing him on the other side. Major Bircham had a bad fall over a gate near the Holts, and, unfortunately, broke four ribs.

**March 29th.—**

We had a miserable day from Bagber; it rained and blew all day, and there were no foxes above ground to cheer us up. They had all evidently voted it was not a hunting day, and, feeling they should not be wanted, retired early. One, imprudent enough to show his nose out in Stalbridge Park, was promptly headed as he was making his way to the Vale, and so our only chance of sport was lost. No other so much as offered us a run, and we went home, damp and desponding, about four o'clock.

**April 2nd.—**

A fine morning greeted the hounds, when we met at the Red Post, Poyntington, and, when a whimper proclaimed a find in Corton Gorse, things looked brighter still. Our fox, however, did not prove as business-like as we expected, for, after a short ring round the top of the hill, he returned to the gorse, and, though he took us then, rather prettily, to Marston Cover, we could only make a weak line thence towards Rimpton, and soon lost. We moved another fox on Mr. Sawtell's farm, and ran him for some twenty minutes, when he went to ground in Hack Hill. But from the Wheatsheaf he went away better, towards Poyntington first, then to the edge of Milborne Slaites, on to Ridge, thence bearing right, up and over Milborne Wick, and, crossing the South Western Railway near Milborne Port Station, ran over the grass into Everlaues, and killed; and so home.

**April 3rd.—**

We met at Redlynch Gate to-day. Found

in Upper Godmanstone Cover, ran up as if for Cogley, but, turning right, the fox went into Moor Wood; left it, heading for Round Hills, and then we had some fine hunting in and out of Park and Moor Woods, and finally up to Cockrow, where we had a check, and lost him after a hunting run of over an hour and a half. Found another in Stavordale, and hunted him a little up and down the woods. Drew through Moor Wood again and Leek's Hill, but did no more. Captain Long met with an unfortunate accident, and broke his arm, his horse treading on it when he was down. There were snow showers as usual to-day.

**April 4th.—**

The Master met very early at Inwood, on account of the Point-to-Point Races in the afternoon. He moved off punctually at eight o'clock, and, after drawing a few hedgerows, worked down to Nyland, and almost instantly clapped hounds on to a fox who had been viewed away just before. With a lovely burst of music they



raced over the pastures down to the Cale, which they crossed, and a handy ford helped the field to re-join them on the other side, heading for the South Western Railway, but did not cross it; turning right when close to it, they ran down fast, through Pelsham Farm, heading for Kington Magna, but at the Buckhorn Weston Tile Yard there was a check. Casting themselves beautifully, the hounds were soon again on the line, and it was all we could do to keep them in sight as they re-traced their steps to Lower Nyland, but did not dwell there, and were off again directly to Temple Lane; thence they ran very straight, passing Derigee, nearly to Moon's Park, and to Baslem's Hill, where they crossed the Sherborne Road; leaving Henstridge on the right, and pointing for Stalbridge, we thought he was making a final effort to get to Prior's Down. He turned, however, sharp to his left, and bearing back for the Sherborne Road, which he crossed at Bow Bridge, after a couple more fields we heard the welcome "Who-whoop," and we saw the eager pack pull down their prey in the open, at the end of an hour and twenty-

eight minutes, over the cream of the country, and at a pace which made all feel it had been the run of the season. In the afternoon were run the Point-to-Point Races at Hazelgrove, where accidents were rife, Mr. Chichester getting a heavy fall, in addition to many minor casualties.

**April 5th.—**

The meet was at Haydon Lodge. We found our first fox this morning in Crackmore, and ran him well towards the Ruins, where he turned left and swam the lake, one hound after him. Meantime another fox took the attention of Brown and the pack, who ran him into Goathill, and on up over Haydon Hill, Dead-man's Copse, and Tripps, turning left to Ashcombe, up to the Holts; and, after a little delay there, out by Rowditches to Marsh Copse, and back again, finally losing in the Holts. Then, in the usual snow showers, we ran another fox from Biddlescombe about Plumley, and eventually to Holtham, and lost.

**April 6th.—**

From Chetnole we had a poor day's sport. We found one in Twizzen Allers, and, his good intentions of going for the Vale being frustrated, our fox headed for the hills, and took us the length of Remedy, and to Up-Cerne Wood, and somewhere on the top of a scentless hill we lost him. We found again in Bide's Gorse, and rattled a wary old fox for a long time round the cover; he went away at last for Paper Hill, but turned incautiously and sharply in the road, and hounds ran into and killed him. We did nothing more that day, but I hear the Master had another very fine day's sport on Saturday, over some of the same country that he was in, or rather near, two days ago.

**April 9th.—**

The meet was at Nether Compton, and there a fox was quickly found and killed. In Potter's Leaze no one was at home; but in Trent Gully we found a fox, and ran him, almost directly, to ground. We next found in a hedge near Hack Hill, and ran him very

fast, through Hack Hill, to Clatcombe; then, more slowly, down the hill below Holway, and to ground in Sandford Orcas. Drew Rimpton Hill, and Marston, blank, and went home.

**April 10th.—**

We met at Holton Cross Roads. Found in Elscombe and chopped, unluckily, in the cover; but another was on foot, and we ran him out to Yarlington, and lost. Found our next in Holbrook, and ran him sharply for a few minutes, and to ground in a hedge above. Whaddon Down, Lord Ilchester's new gorse, and Hadspen, produced nothing; but Lily Wood was better provided, and we soon forced out the occupant, who made the best of his way down to Yarlington Wood, up past Dean's Bush, by Whaddon Down, on past Verigore, over the railway, and to ground in twenty-two minutes, under a cowstall in Charlton Musgrove. A terrier soon bolted him, and we went on by Round Hill House, bearing for Stavordale Priory, and then by Cockrow and up into New Park, and on through the big woods to

Dropping Gutter, where, having given us an hour's gallop, more or less, he left us.

**April 11th.—**

The Master brought his pack by train to Evercreech. He found in Creech Hill, ran a ring for twenty minutes or so, and to ground. Running through Milton Cleveland and the Creech Hill gorses, in vain, the hounds found their next fox near Pitcombe, rattled him towards Shepton Montague, and worked him slowly into Hadspen, on, through the Punch Bowl, and into Lily Wood, where he doubled back, and then ran alongside the Wincanton Road, and ran hounds out of scent on the ploughs near Dean's Bush. Not much scent, though we followed his line for an hour and three-quarters.

**April 12th.—**

There was some rain when we met at Middlemarsh, and had a fine run from the Common, by way of Eight Acres, rising the hill through Mount Silver and Remedy, on to

Upcerne Wood, where he bore right to Batcombe, and back to Remedy, and lost, in about an hour. Found then a good fox in Admiral Digby's Plantation, who ran out for Sweethills (near which Colonel Everard Digby got a very nasty fall over timber), then turned back right, and ran well to Holnest House, over the park, and then on, as if for Berkeley Gorse, and sharp round Boy's Hill, and past the old Grange House. We had been going thirty minutes up to this point, and now got to slow hunting, going by Woodfalls, and marking him to ground in the main earth just out of our country; so there he remains.

**April 13th.—**

We had a busy day from the Kennels. From Tennants' Wood we ran well to Gale's Plantation, and to Maperton Gorse, and lost. Found our next in Templecombe Wood, and worked him, now fast, now slow, by Stowell, Charlton Gorse, Tennants' Wood, Maperton, Lattiford, pointing for Elsombe, towards Dean's Bush, over the Clapton earths, then

towards Blackford, where a cur dog interfered, and his volunteer services entirely spoilt sport, for we could do nothing beyond the Quarry Plantation.

**April 14th.—**

To wind up the week, I hear the Master had another good Saturday—a very fast forty-eight minutes from Stock; a good thirty, with a kill in the open, from Brickell's Wood; and a late afternoon run from Prior's Down, and to ground, I believe, in a faggot stack in Henstridge.

These hounds have been out every day this week:—Monday, at Stourton; Tuesday, Thornford, for Honeycombe; Wednesday, at Redlynch, from which they drew Cogley, and Pink Wood also; Thursday, at Middlemarsh, in considerable rain; Friday, at Hunters' Lodge, for the large Stourton Woodlands; and Saturday, at Purse Caundle, for the Holts. Being all woodland days, and woodland country being almost impossible to describe, I will not go

into details. Suffice it to say that the season is over, and, though we have had considerable fun, and many good days, to be thankful for, it has been, on the whole, a bad season, and must, to both Master and Huntsman, have been one of considerable disappointment, owing to the very dry weather, which, in the Vale, always means a want of scent; the rain, which has happily come now, bodes good to the farmer, but has hastened the end of our sport, for the soft ground, springing crops, and rolled fields would not be improved by the trampling of hunters' hoofs. Ned 'Teece, our excellent First Whip, has had his last ride in that capacity, as he gains his step and goes as Huntsman to the South Staffordshire, where he carries with him the good wishes of all who have known him here.

This season, including also the Master's Wednesdays and Saturdays, all of which are not recorded, resulted in the death of seventy-eight and a half brace of foxes.



Mr. Guest continued to hunt the country at his own expense till May, 1900—when he resigned the Mastership.

His Hounds, having been refused by the Hunt Committee to whom he had offered them, were sold: and thus, the famous old Blackmore Vale Blood, which had been so carefully bred by Mr. Digby, Sir Richard Glyn, and Mr. Guest—and enriched by the latter, by the purchase, in 1896, of the celebrated Brocklesby Dogs—was dispersed over England, France, and America, and was lost, for ever, to the Blackmore Vale Country.









